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Saturday Review

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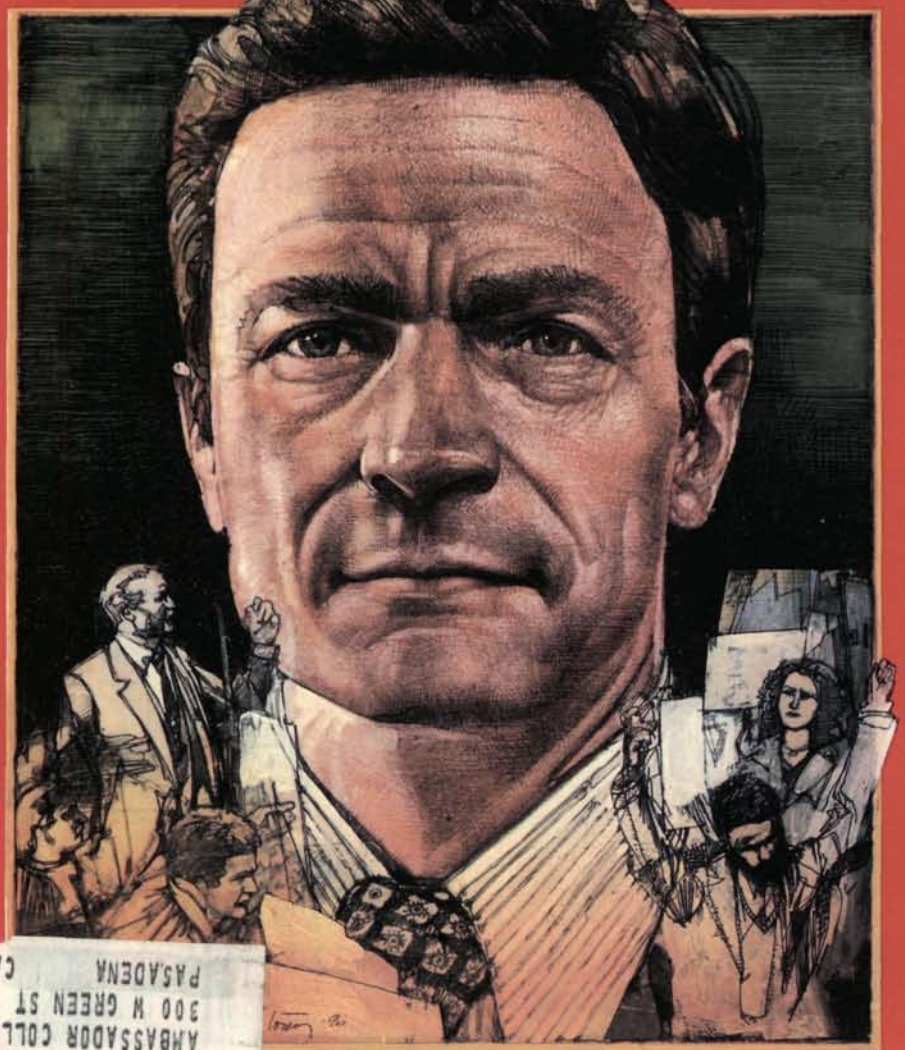

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Box or Menthol:

10 Carlton have less tar than 1:

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Marlboro Lights	12	0.8
Merit	8	0.6
Salem Lights	10	0.8
Vantage	11	0.8
Winston Lights	13	0.9
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Carlton Menthol	**less than 1**	**0.1**
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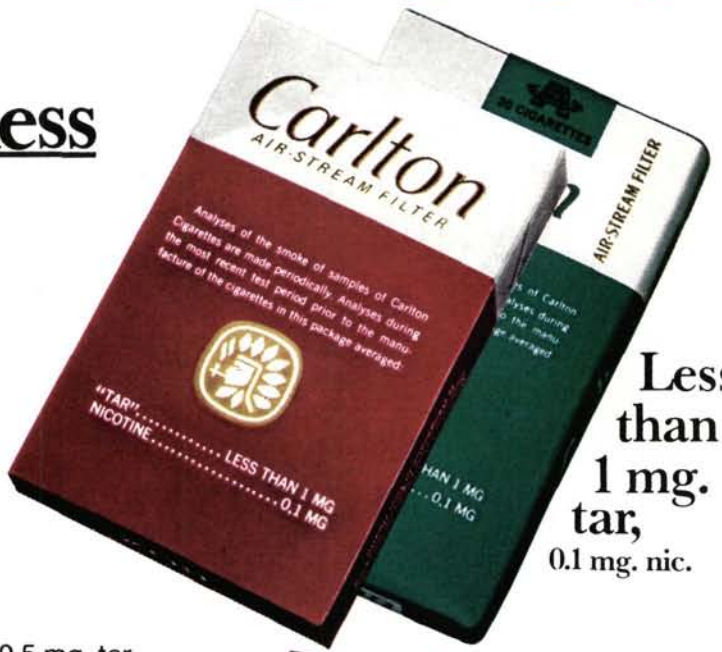

Less than 1 mg. tar, 0.1 mg. nic.

Of all brands, lowest...Carlton Box: less than 0.5 mg. tar and 0.05 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report May '78.

Carlton.

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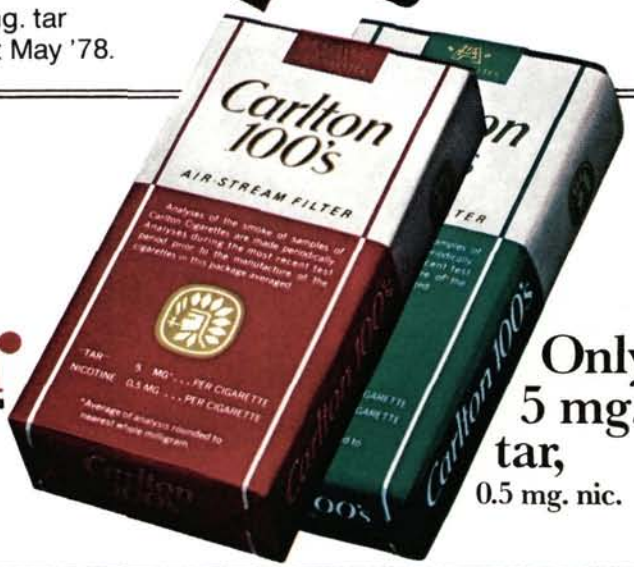
The lighter 100's.



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Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

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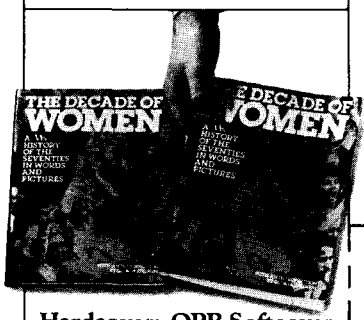

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A Fable For Now:

Why Elephants Can't Live on Peanuts

The Elephant is a remarkable animal...huge, yet able to move quickly...stronger than any person, yet willing to work hard if properly treated.

One day, an Elephant was ambling through the forest. To her surprise, she found her path to the water hole blocked by a huge pile of sticks, vines, and brambles.

"Hello?" she called out over the barricade. "What gives?"

From behind the pile popped the Monkey. "Buzz off, snake-snoot," the Monkey shouted. "It's an outrage to little folk how much you take in, so the rest of us animals have seized the water hole and the food supply. You're gross, and we're revolting!"

"You certainly give that appearance," the Elephant noted quietly. "What's eating you?"

"It's *you* that's doing too much eating," the Monkey replied, "but we're going to change all that. Strict rations for you, fat friend. No more of your obscene profiteering at the feed trough." Overhead, a Parrot screamed: "From each according to your ability. To each according to our need. Gimme your crackers, gimme *all* your crackers!"

The Elephant was upset at this enormous misunderstanding. Yet, though her heart pounded, between the ears she was quite unflappable. "A moment, please," she said. "Though it may seem that I consume a great deal, it's no more than my share. Because I am large—not fat—it just takes more to keep me going. How can I work hard if you won't let me have the proper nourishment?"

The Monkey sneered. "Knock off that mumbo-jumbo, Dumbo," he said. "You already net more than a million Spiders. You take in more than a thousand Pack Rats. You profit more from the jungle's abundance than a hundred Monkeys!"

"But I also can haul tree trunks too heavy for any other creature," the Elephant said. "I can explore for new food supplies and water holes, and clear paths through the jungle with my strong legs. My feet can crush, my shoulders can pull, my trunk can lift. I am full of energy. I even give rides to the little ones. But I can't survive on peanuts."

Hours passed. The Elephant, denied access to her eating and drinking grounds, felt hungrier and hungrier, thirstier and thirstier. But soon, so did the other animals. For the sticks and vines that the animals had dragged together and woven into a barricade had become a solid dam, diverting the stream that fed the watering hole. "Help, help," the animals shouted, "crisis, crisis!"

The Elephant surveyed the scene. "Friends," she said, "see what a fix we're all in. Thank goodness I still have the energy to help. And, with your permission, I will." They quickly consented, and she set to work on the dam, pushing earth and pulling plants until the water hole again began to fill. "That's nice," the animals cried, greeting her undamming with faint praise.

"You see," the Elephant said, "you need a big beast for a big job, and a big beast has big needs. Not just to stay alive and growing, but to put a bit aside for tomorrow. And to have a bit extra for working especially hard, or for sharing with have-not animals."

She noticed that everybody had resumed drinking thirstily. Well, that tickled her old ivories, for all she really wanted was to be allowed to go on doing her customary work without any new wrinkles. No need for hurt feelings. After all, who ever heard of a thin-skinned Elephant?

Moral: Meeting America's energy needs is a big job and it takes big companies. If an energy company doesn't earn a profit proportionate to its size, it won't be able to seek and produce more energy. And that's no fable.

Mobil

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Saturday Review

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LETTERS

Food, Glorious Food

I found William Serrin's "Let Them Eat Junk: The Triumph of Food Processing" [February 2] interesting and informative. I am a scientist by profession, and I won't allow food products in my house with ingredients lists that resemble the inventory of my research laboratory.

The food industry can be made to listen. Customer awareness and public pressure caused the baby-food manufacturers to remove sugar, salt, and other additives from their products. Their labels now proudly proclaim the absence of the very same additives that were present in their food a few years ago. Selective buying of additive-free foods is the most powerful tool consumers can use to stop the proliferation of junk.

Curtis F. Holmes
East Amherst, New York

As a consumer and a wheat farmer I would like to commend you on "Let Them Eat Junk" and "Bread and Factories." About three years ago I compared the price that a farmer receives for his wheat per pound with that which a health-food store charges for wheat. I found that the farmer was paid three cents per pound and the store got 33 cents per pound.

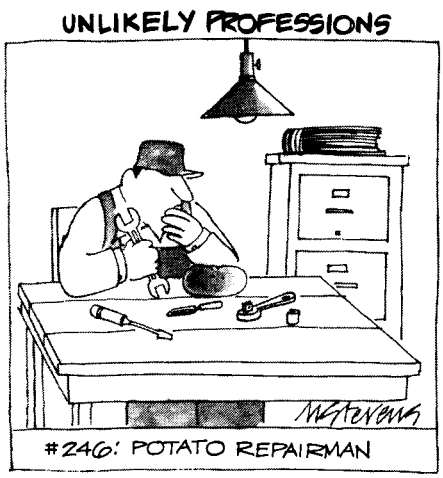
If you want to bake your own bread from unadulterated wheat flour, you will have to pay about a 3,000 percent markup from the original source.

Rosanne Hannah
Saratoga, California

Hats off to William Serrin's "Let Them Eat Junk." For three years I have made an all-out effort to have in our home only "natural" food without chemical additives. We therefore have nutritionally wholesome, tasty, and attractive meals. I also have (1) a husband who glares with astonishment at our astronomical food bills and (2) two children (ages four and seven) who regularly lament the lack of sugar-coated cereal, soda-pop, packaged cookies, and instant noodles for lunch.

I will persevere. My question is, What happens when our budget can't? How does the average citizen combat the five or six conglomerates that control the food industry in the United States?

Joanne M. Jones
Indianapolis, Indiana



A Pat on the Back

Saturday Review should be commended for its recent series of polls on such interesting topics as voter attitudes and job satisfaction. Joined with the ongoing work of such national polling agencies as Gallup and Roper, your effort to reach across the country to feel the American pulse goes a long way toward filling the information gap left by the tendencies of social scientists to limit the distribution of questionnaires to college freshmen and sophomores.

H. Wayne Hogan
Cookeville, Tennessee

The Right to Publish

In "An Encounter Between Soviet and American Writers" [November 24], Norman Cousins comes close to libel in his discussion of *Metropol*, an anthology put together by 23 Russian writers that was printed in America by my publishing house, Ardis.

Mr. Cousins writes: "It developed, too, that the American publisher of *Metropol* actually had an opportunity to publish the anthology with the approval of the Soviet copyright authority but proceeded on his own, making the project seem more of an outlaw venture than it actually was."

Mr. Cousins must have gotten his information from Soviet officials. I would like to present the facts. The Soviet copyright authority (VAAP) has never authorized the publication, in Russian, of a work not officially published in the USSR. In spite of this, Ardis sent a telegram to VAAP asking for their assistance in publishing a new edition of *Metropol* in Russian and in English. VAAP replied that no such work was registered in the Soviet Union (i.e., it does not exist) but that we should not dare publish it because "several" authors objected. Not one of the 23 authors who appear in *Metropol* (or its five editors) has ever publicly or privately renounced the anthology or asked that his works be withdrawn from any edition of it.

The role of Ardis was merely that of one publisher among many. Norton & Company is doing the English edition this year. Editions Gallimard had plans for a French edition and was selling world rights even before the two Ardis Russian editions appeared.

I never viewed *Metropol* as a particularly provocative undertaking. All the works had been submitted to Soviet publishers in the past and only the hysterical reaction of Mr. Cousins's interlocutor Felix Kuznetsov turned *Metropol* into a *cause célèbre*. Mr. Cousins's assertion that the result of all of this has been a gain for the participants in *Metropol* is absolutely ridiculous. The ban on their works has been relaxed, but most of the authors are still in serious difficulty.

Carl Proffer
Editor, Ardis Publishing Co.
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Norman Cousins replies: Mr. Proffer says I was in error in stating that Ardis could have published the anthology with the approval of the Soviet copyright authority. My information on this came not from Soviet officials, but from American sources in Moscow, whom I regard as trustworthy. I of course accept Mr. Proffer's statement on the subject.

I take the strongest exception, however, to his characterization of Mr. Kuznetsov as my "interlocutor." If Mr. Proffer had read the accounts in *Saturday Review* of the three meetings between American and Soviet writers, he would have known that I presented, on behalf of the American writers, a vigorous protest over the treatment of dissidents by Soviet authorities. I trust that his injudiciousness and irresponsibility in this respect is not a reflection of his approach to issues involving the international community.

Please address letters for publication to Letters to the Editor, Saturday Review, *1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York 10019. Letters may be edited for space and clarity. We are unable to acknowledge or return unused letters.*

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POLL RESULTS On Immigration

IN THE SECOND of a series of *Saturday Review* polls (December 1979), we asked you to air your views on a range of issues related to immigration. We received nearly 2,000 responses. The results indicate that the inscription on the Statue of Liberty—

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed, to me:
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.

—no longer describes the country's sentiments toward immigrants. The results do suggest, however, that our readers are more sympathetic to the plight of immigrants and refugees than they believe the population at large to be.

Only 9 percent of the poll respondents feel that the above inscription "definitely" reflects the basic sentiments of the country toward immigrants; nearly half (49 percent) believe it expresses the sentiments of the country "not very well" or "not at all." A vast majority (84 percent) are of the opinion that accommodating more refugees may require Americans to make sacrifices.

Saturday Review readers are themselves cautious about accepting more immigrants. Only 25 percent believe the rate should be increased, while 42 percent think it should be decreased. Twenty-two percent are happy with the present rate.

Still, the responses did show a willingness to be flexible when lives might hang in the balance. Fifty-three percent of our readers feel exceptions in immigration quotas should be made to let the Boat People into the country. And when confronted with the statement, "I would rather see the Boat People drown at sea than allow any more refugees into this country," 85 percent disagreed.

Interestingly, however, readers' concern for the physical well-being of refugees is not reflected in their list of which immigrants should get top priority for admission. Forty-seven percent give highest priority to "victims of political oppression," only 20 percent give it to "the sick or starving." (This data may simply reflect the fact that "political oppression" has come to connote a life-or-death situation.) Sixteen percent say top priority should be given to "anyone seeking a better life," 2 percent think it should go to "those eager to escape for other social reasons," and less than 1 percent believe top priority should go to "those unemployed in their native country."

As for the ostensible contributions that immigrants make to American life, readers have mixed feelings. About one-third (31 percent) believe that "taking in more refugees will reduce the quality of life nationwide." Respondents are evenly divided on whether immigrants will (46 percent) or will not (44 percent) be a burden to taxpayers. At the same time, 72 percent believe that immigrants work harder than native-born Americans, and 52 percent think immigrants bring valuable scientific and artistic talent to the nation. Forty-two percent of the respondents state that "immigrants are needed because they are willing to [do low-paying] work which few Americans will do these days."

Questioned specifically about Vietnamese refugees, 54 percent think "they will be good hard workers," while 31 percent feel "they will take jobs away from American citizens," and 20 percent believe "they will probably end up on welfare." Almost a third (31 percent) of the respondents added that they think it's too soon to be able to predict accurately how the Vietnamese immigrants will function in our society.

At the conclusion of the poll, readers were asked to indicate the latest member of their families to come to America. One fifth (20 percent) reply that they or their parents were immigrants, 28 percent respond that one or more of their grandparents were, and nearly half (47 percent) indicate that their families had been in America for four generations or more. Perhaps those figures explain our readers' rather reserved receptivity to immigrants. For although America is truly a land of immigrants, the immigration of their families is history to our readers—perhaps forgotten history. ◉

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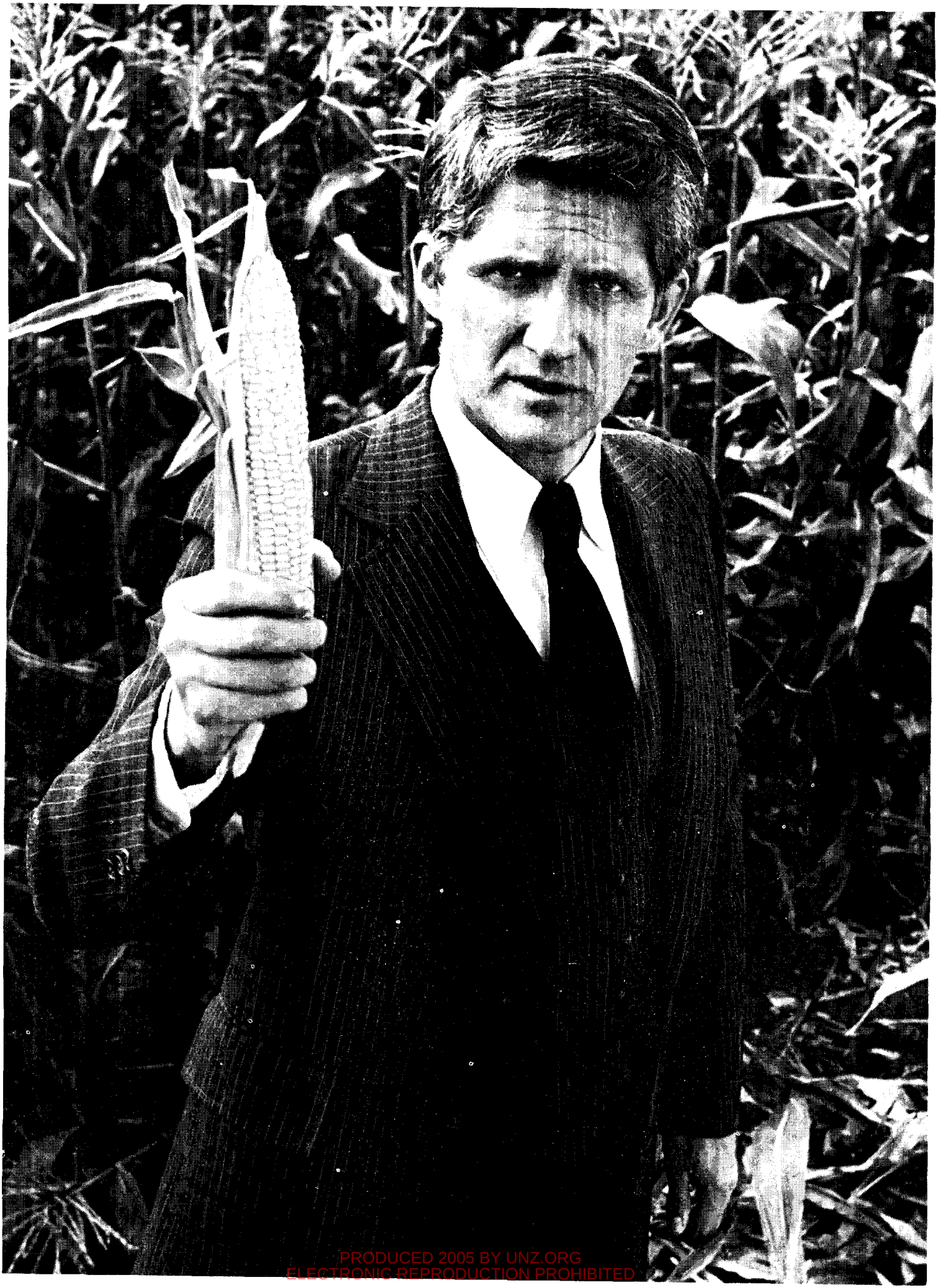

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If nobody plants the seeds, where is the corn going to come from?

Research and development is the "seed corn" for this nation's industrial sector. R&D spawns innovation, invention, and the technology that has made America the most productive nation on earth and, in the process, has created hundreds of thousands of new and better jobs.

For the United States to maintain its industrial leadership, significant continuing expenditures for research and development must be made. Instead, expenditures are declining. Less "seed corn" is being set aside.

The reason is that today's governmental and inflationary environment actually *discourages* innovation and new ideas. The result: delayed governmental approvals and arbitrary application of rules smother incentives for developing much vitally needed new technology related to energy. Regulatory indecision is currently hampering "full-speed-ahead" production of heavy crude oil, the gasification of coal, and the extraction of petroleum from shale deposits.

With arbitrary regulations and persistent inflation, business planners find it almost impossible to forecast accurately the total cost of developing a new product, bringing it on stream, and marketing it successfully. In the face of such uncertainty, it's no wonder that many American businessmen now refuse to risk funds in new programs and new ventures.

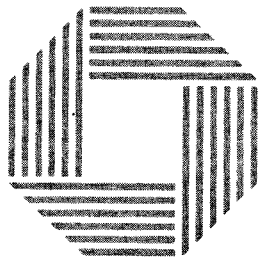
Investment in R&D by private U.S. industry dropped 32% as a percentage of G.N.P. from 1968 to 1978. Why? Because industry concentrates its "seed money" on low-risk, small-scale projects with quick payoffs. By way of contrast, R&D expenditures by the USSR, Japan and West Germany in the 1968-1978 period were up nearly 60% as a percent of G.N.P.

What's the solution? Chase believes it lies in taking the chains off the free market system:

- By reducing government overregulation.
- By placing time limits on agency approvals of new projects or products.
- By allowing tax credits for R&D that would stimulate business investment for basic research and new product development.
- By permitting a faster rate of depreciation of capital equipment.

R&D has produced the technology that makes this country the world's leading industrial nation. However, because a number of other countries are increasing their investment in R&D, competition gets tougher each year. To maintain our leadership, we must enhance the rewards for inventiveness and encourage greater R&D efforts more than ever.

Turning our research and development decisions over to regulators for whom the safe and easy answer is always "No" leads only to one end: Stagnation and Decline. Which is not our idea of what America's future should be.



CHASE

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FRONT RUNNERS

Building Up Babel

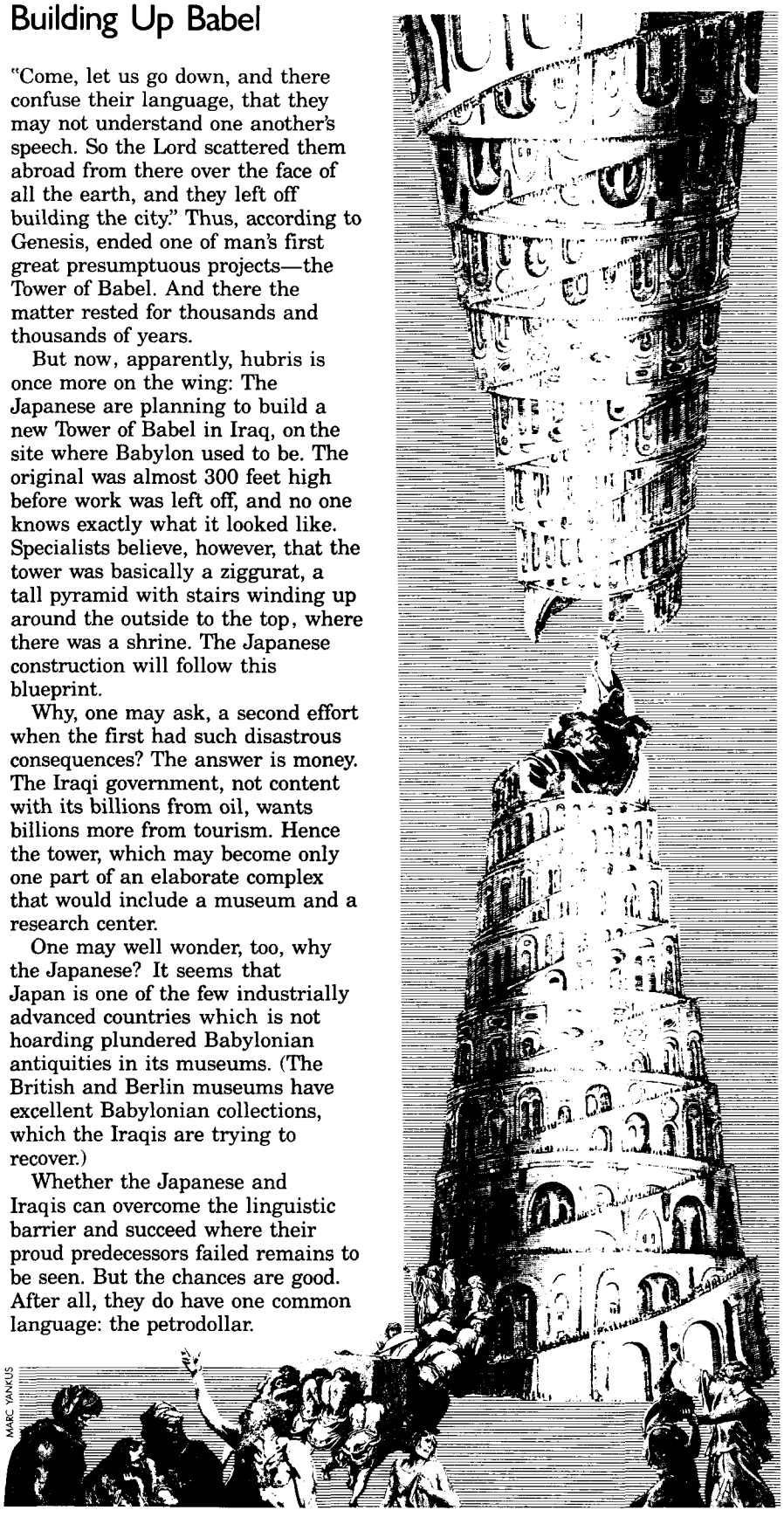
"Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city." Thus, according to Genesis, ended one of man's first great presumptuous projects—the Tower of Babel. And there the matter rested for thousands and thousands of years.

But now, apparently, hubris is once more on the wing: The Japanese are planning to build a new Tower of Babel in Iraq, on the site where Babylon used to be. The original was almost 300 feet high before work was left off, and no one knows exactly what it looked like. Specialists believe, however, that the tower was basically a ziggurat, a tall pyramid with stairs winding up around the outside to the top, where there was a shrine. The Japanese construction will follow this blueprint.

Why, one may ask, a second effort when the first had such disastrous consequences? The answer is money. The Iraqi government, not content with its billions from oil, wants billions more from tourism. Hence the tower, which may become only one part of an elaborate complex that would include a museum and a research center.

One may well wonder, too, why the Japanese? It seems that Japan is one of the few industrially advanced countries which is not hoarding plundered Babylonian antiquities in its museums. (The British and Berlin museums have excellent Babylonian collections, which the Iraqis are trying to recover.)

Whether the Japanese and Iraqis can overcome the linguistic barrier and succeed where their proud predecessors failed remains to be seen. But the chances are good. After all, they do have one common language: the petrodollar.



Kaboom! Soviets and the Environment

According to the national mythology, big business is responsible for pollution. Companies dump chemical wastes into rivers, despoil the landscape, etc.—all in pursuit of the buck. But now a new book, smuggled out of the Soviet Union and published in West Germany, offers definitive proof that capitalists have nothing on socialists when it comes to brutalizing nature.

Boris Komarow (apparently a pseudonym) had access to classified Russian studies and to dissident ecologists. His book lays to rest the Kremlin's denials of environmental problems in the USSR. Komarow provides several examples of how badly nature fares in the Soviet Union:

- At the end of 1977 black snow fell on Moscow. Soot from factory chimneys had polluted snow crystals in the upper atmosphere.
- In the spring of 1978, ornithologists banded 300 young wild ducks on a Siberian lake to trace their movements. By autumn all except one duck had been illegally shot by hunters.
- Lake Baikal, in Siberia, is the deepest freshwater lake in the world. In 1967 a plant that processes wood into insulation for automobile tires went into operation on its shores and began dumping wastes into the lake. Some specialists, Komarow reports, objected at a session of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. But they were silenced by one distinguished member, who said: "So what if we pollute? Now that we have nuclear power, we can easily blast a big pit, fill it with water, and create another Lake Baikal."

Underlying that sort of indifference to the environment is a belief that communism is supposed to dominate nature, which is regarded as the enemy of progress. Moreover, Komarow asserts, the Soviets feel they can ignore the ecological balance because they face no public pressure. (The truth about Russian environmental conditions is extremely restricted.) "If we want to survive we must know the truth," he concludes, "and we must communicate it to others." ◉

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EDITORIAL

The Number-One Problem

HARVARD MAGAZINE recently asked seven faculty luminaries to identify the most important problem facing the nation and the world today. Their answers, and the implications of those answers, are worth scrutiny.

The article begins with a response by Robert Coles, professor of psychiatry, who declares that the world's food shortage should be at the top of the international agenda. More than half the humans on earth, he writes, are in the grip of hunger or malnutrition. "Words such as Biafra, and now Cambodia, penetrate our awareness for a brief moment, then fade into the outer precincts of the mind....I can't think of any problem more serious for the men, women, and children of this world than that of food—its aching absence for millions and millions of human beings, in every continent."

E.O. Wilson, professor of science, focuses on the extinction of various species on earth. He estimates that one thousand of the five million living species of animals, insects, plants, and mosses on earth will die out this year. The single greatest cause: the fast-spreading destruction of tropical forests and other key habitats. Between now and the year 2000, the extinction rate could swell to one species per hour. "In our own lifetime," writes Wilson, "humanity will suffer an incomparable loss in aesthetic value, practical benefits from biological research, and environmental stability."

George Rupp, dean of the faculty of divinity, is convinced that "enormously uneven distribution of wealth" is the number-one problem. What makes this situation all the more acute, he says, is the fact that the world's resources are limited. There can be no fundamental improvement in the total picture, he believes, without reduced consumption and a downward adjustment in the standard of living for those people who now enjoy the larger part of the pie. "We must struggle toward institutional patterns that reinforce simplicity and frugality rather than unnecessary consumption."

Stephen A. Marglin, professor of economics, is concerned with the kind of economic planning that will predominate. "Will it be planning of, by, and for big business, with perhaps token representatives of big labor and governmental or academic *apparatchiks* to complete the picture? Or will planning be participatory in procedure and oriented to the needs of people as producers and consumers?" Answering his own question, Professor Marglin writes that "if planning is to be democratic in process ... the entire structure of the capitalist economy will need to be overhauled and to become more participatory, all the way from the shop floor to the corporate board room."

Robert Nozick, professor of philosophy, identifies intrusion and interference by government as the central evil. He sees ubiquitous and swarming bureaucrats and political leaders as the perpetrators and perpetuators of a malevolent cycle. They pounce on any social difficulty as the pretext for government control and then exploit the problems created by such control as the justification for even further seizure of power. Nozick anticipates that his academic colleagues will do little to solve this problem. He predicts that they will be distracted by chic causes while ignoring what he considers to be a fundamental issue.

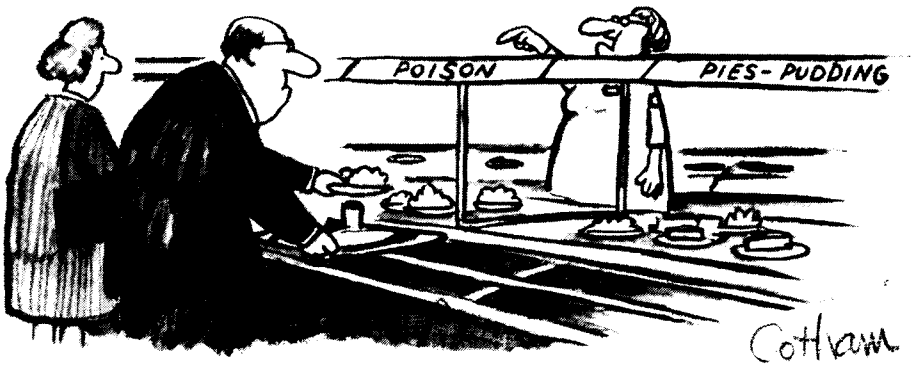
Peter Rogers, the Gordon McKay professor of environmental engineering, calls attention to mass poverty. He points out that in 1967 more than half of the world's people had a per capita income of less than $550. If the industrial countries are removed from the computation, the average income drops to less than $160. Professor Rogers sees this disparity as a spluttering fuse attached to the world's total economy. "The next decade," he writes, "will be crucial in determining whether or not the 21st century will be worth leaving to our children."

David Riesman, the Henry Ford II professor of social sciences, believes that the essential problem today is no different from what it has been ever since the dropping of the world's first nuclear explosive on Hiroshima: the control of nuclear weapons. The question of weapons control should not depend on our vacillating feelings of good or ill will toward the Russians, he says; it has to do with our own safety and the safety of everyone else on this planet. "We must resolve to bear in mind the interests of the United States and of the world in staying alive even before we consider our personal moral posture, whether the issue is this nation's relationship with South Africa or its acceptance of the party line of the Begin government in Israel." Riesman believes we have to become "less truculent in foreign affairs than we have recently been, less xenophobic, without in any way accepting the notion that this country is in decline.... We live in a world economy and a world polity."

What is most significant about these assessments of the future is that Riesman is the only expert who addresses himself to the whole problem instead of one of its parts. None of the specific challenges the other faculty members define can be solved or even seriously addressed if nuclear war should break out. Wilson is worried about the disappearance of millions of species of insects, plants, and mosses. The threatened extinction of the human species calls for at least as much attention. Coles, Rupp, and Rogers properly identify famine, maldistribution of wealth, and poverty as major problems. Yet world peace is a prerequisite for any improvement in the living conditions of the world's people.

The year 1979 was the first year in human history when spending for destructive purposes exceeded $1 billion a day. As long as the world's resources are being squandered in this manner, any talk of making the planet more congenial to the human species is academic.

The danger of nuclear war is the number-one problem. The number-two problem is that many of the best minds in our country are not focused on the number-one problem. **—N.C.**



"Hey, you! Can't you read? Don't eat that stuff—it's poison!"

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LIGHT REFRACTIONS

Possessed by the Apostrophe

MARJORIE REA, of Wayzata, Minnesota, has written me a letter beginning, "My gripe is the Wild Apostrophe, especially in small-town newspapers. Today's throwaway reads: 'Shop here for great gift's.... We carry a complete line of ice and roller skate's.'"

A few years ago, when my wife and I were on vacation in northern California, we spent one night in a small town where I found a newspaper of the kind Rea was writing about. Among the classified ads was one that said, "Wanted: Snow plow for Willy's Jeep." I pictured Willy, whom everyone knew and whose jeep everyone recognized on sight, and I had an image of friendly hometown folks asking, "Say, Willy, you get your snow plow yet?" Reading the ad, I was lost in these thoughts for several seconds before it dawned on me that the car was simply a Willys Jeep belonging to an anonymous advertiser. This was almost certainly what Rea would term a "Wild Apostrophe." It was a sad realization; those seconds with Willy and his friends were warm and pleasant.

Wild Apostrophes are common, especially, it seems, in rural America. I don't know why so many people have trouble with such a simple little mark, but they do. And because they do, some linguists (incidentally, a linguist today is less often a master of languages than one who philosophizes about language) would like to abolish apostrophes altogether. One of the simplest and most popular solutions to problems in learning during the past 15 or 20 years appears to have been to proclaim that the rule causing the difficulty isn't really worth learning after all and probably should be eliminated.

The argument of those who don't think apostrophes belong in the language usually goes something like, "You can tell by context whether or not a possessive is intended. For instance, in the phrase 'a dogs hind leg,' it is clear that 'dogs' is possessive." True. But "dogs hind leg" is too easy. How about "The dogs barking"? Apostrophes can convey important shades of meaning. Try these four sentences:

The dog's barking.
The dog's barking frightened off the intruder.
The dogs' barking frightened off the intruder.
The dogs, barking, frightened off the intruder.

The last three sentences use the same words. The differences in meaning result only from the placement of the apostrophes and commas. It seems to me that the proper handling of apostrophes, as well as commas, is a valuable skill, well worth the little bit of study it requires.

A couple of years ago, we had a serendipitous encounter with an apostrophe, or, more precisely, the absence of an apostrophe. That time we were on vacation in Vermont. Driving on Route 4 on our way to Stowe, passing through the Killington area, we saw an attractive restaurant called Laurens. The name *Laurens* intrigued me. It looked vaguely French and also vaguely familiar. There have been one or two French artists named Laurens, and it's more than likely that I'd heard of them; and there's a town in South Carolina named Laurens, the seat of Laurens County; and there were a couple of American Revolutionary leaders from South Carolina named Laurens. As a native South Carolinian, I probably felt slight reverberations from my childhood when I saw the restaurant sign.

Anyway, having been attracted by the name, whether through pleasant associations or mere curiosity, I phoned Laurens from Stowe and made dinner reservations. We ate there that evening, and I'd be negligent if I failed to report that the decor was charming, the service was excellent, and the food was absolutely first-rate, although those details are certainly not the point of my story.

A young man named Thomas Rabeck had bought an old, dilapidated house in Vermont, and he and his wife and his father moved up from New Jersey to convert the house into what is now Laurens "Gracious Country Dining." When I told Rabeck that it was the name Laurens that had caught my eye and my fancy and asked him where its origin lay, he told me that his wife's name was Lauren. They were going to call the place Lauren's, but she suggested that the name would become a bit more interesting without the apostrophe.

She was right. I doubt that I'd have noticed a place called Lauren's, and I know surely that I wouldn't have called a restaurant named Lauren's long distance for a dinner reservation.

This is as good a time as any to reveal the little-known truth about the Willys Jeep, one of the good things that came as spin-offs of World War II. Originally, it was Willy's Jeep, but Willy's wife said, "Willy, wouldn't it be more interesting if we left off the apostrophe?" And, wisely, they did. It is questionable whether, if they'd called the thing Willy's Jeep instead of the Willys Jeep, the army would have taken it seriously. Jeep is capricious enough, and there is a limit to how much whimsy the American military can take.

—Thomas H. Middleton

"Quite common, really. One partner simply outgrows the other."

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The Missing Lion Skin

The following essay was written on June 20, 1979—the day President Jimmy Carter and Soviet President Leonid I. Brezhnev met in Vienna to sign SALT-II. We feel that, if anything, it is more timely today. First published in Freedom Appeals, *a monthly compilation of documents relating to dissidents, the article has been translated by David Wilson.*

— Prague

IT'S RAINING. It's been raining for three days. It has also gotten noticeably chillier, despite the warm kisses that Brezhnev and Carter bestowed upon each other in Vienna. First Moscow, then Prague and a few other fraternal meteorological stations announced that things have warmed up considerably, but my thermometer has a mind of its own. It has gotten noticeably chillier. Perhaps I'll have to get a new thermometer.

Only because of the weather did I learn about the sincerely felt enthusiasm with which I welcomed the freshly signed treaty of world historical importance [SALT-II]. Had it not rained, I'd have had no time to read the papers and I would have missed out on the news of my own approval. That's how it always is when a person is working and can't keep track of all the things he's approved of with such heartfelt enthusiasm.

It has become a custom for our newspapers to welcome or denounce something in the name of all our people everywhere. According to this arithmetic, the majority of mankind is, in fact, on our side, but because it generally ignores such things, it is condemned to play the role of the minority. Or better, the minority that we are allowed to hear is automatically a majority. Despite this juggling act, however, I still occasionally hear of our "majority" getting such a sound thrashing at the polls that they never see the inside of a parliament building. But even the smallest possible majority that holds to our truth is, in fact, an overwhelming majority, because our truth is historical truth.

In the so-called logic of history, the merest whim of the rulers becomes reality for their subjects, or rather the wishes of the rulers are presented as real reality. They call it real socialism. For example, *they* have veal cutlets for dinner and are convinced that the entire nation is stuffing itself with veal. *Their* limousines are always comfortable and roomy, and it never occurs to them that the buses might be constantly jammed to bursting. Only a tiny minority is dissatisfied with such logic; the majority expresses its assent by remaining silent, chiefly because only criminals and madmen give voice to their disagreement. Those who have the veal cutlets, however, have a monopoly on diagnosis, and so the problem of what is real and what is fiction is solved. Veal cutlets are real reality and the claim that not everyone has them remains a hostile fiction.

Occasionally, though, that logic begins to exhibit slight weaknesses. For instance, a country that is solidly in the ranks of orthodox Marxism-Leninism suddenly falls to its knees as one nation when the Pope arrives. But there's a simple way out of that dead-end in logic by asking, "What Pope?" In the confusion you ask yourself whether the Pope was in Poland at all. He was, is the curt reply. And did all Poland fall to its knees when the Pope came? The answer comes promptly: "What Pope?"

This logic is illustrated even more graphically by a lion hunt—said to have taken place in the interior of Africa. The prime ministers of Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union all shot the same lion and then could not decide who should get the skin of this king of beasts. They stripped the animal of its hide and the negotiations began. By evening, no decision had been reached so the British prime minister guarded the skin through the night. Next morning they continued their talks over the skin, but again they could come to no agreement. The second night the French premier guarded the skin. The third day the talks were once more inconclusive, and it was the Soviet premier's turn to watch over the skin. Next morning, the

"In addition, your Honor, my client requests that he be allowed to wear his lucky hat throughout these proceedings."

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skin was gone. When the two other prime ministers asked what had become of it, the Soviet leader replied with innocent astonishment: "What skin?" "Wait a minute," the others said. "Did we or did we not shoot a lion?" "We did," the Soviet leader agreed willingly. "And did we argue over who was to get the skin?" "We did." "And did his lordship then guard the skin the first night?" "Yes, he did." "And was the skin here the next day?" "It was." "Did we fail to agree the second day as well?" "Yes, we did." "And did monsieur guard the skin?" "He did." "So where's the skin?" There was a brief pause before the answer: "What skin?"

I'm afraid that's the way it is with the astonishment the Soviets feign over the "myth of the Soviet threat and the long arm of Moscow." The innocent shrug of the shoulders has, after all, been used for years now. Once, when the Americans claimed there were Soviet rockets in Cuba, they were given a similar answer: "What rockets?" Shortly thereafter, the nonexistent rockets had to be shipped away when they nearly brought the world to the brink of war. "There are Cuban soldiers fighting in Angola." "What Cubans?" The very same Cubans who later went on dress parade during an official visit to Angola by Castro. And so it was afterward in Ethiopia, except by that time the Cubans didn't even bother trying to disguise their presence. The same practices prevail in supplying arms to Yemen and a number of other countries. The world first learned of Soviet advisors in Afghanistan only after dozens were killed in domestic riots. "What advisors?" was the response.

Nothing changes. When a Soviet army a half-million strong came here 11 years ago, the Russians said we had invited them. They repeated it so often and so long that finally a couple of anonymous individuals agreed, and in a flash this became the wishes of an overwhelming majority. "How can you talk about interference in your internal affairs when we came at your invitation?" And the word "occupation" became "assistance" in their vocabulary.

Early this year our papers were swearing up and down that there wasn't a single Vietnamese soldier on Cambodian territory, only to turn around less than a month later and print a statement of gratitude from Cambodia for the disinterested assistance of Vietnam. So I don't really know at all why they want me to donate money to the fighting Vietnamese. Is a soldier in greater need along the borders of China or the borders of Cambodia? I suppose the neediest of all is the poor wretch who has had enough wars and attempts to flee Vietnam in a leaky boat. The whole world is talking about it, but *they* will look baffled and reply, "What refugees?" And then, quite in contradiction, they will add that it constitutes interference in their internal affairs. They, of course, are free to hurl abuse at the much-kissed Carter for things he has said, and for things he has never mentioned at all. They may hand out advice on word and deed but they hold to the Stalinist maxim about foreign snouts rooting around in their garden. They and they alone possess the truth, for theirs is historical truth, and it is historical because it is theirs. If others still continue to pull their puppets by visible strings, *they* have their own methods of "hidden operators and speakers," to maintain the puppeteering analogy, that would warm the heart of Mr. Obraztsov himself [a well-known Soviet puppeteer].

For this reason they could say quite truthfully in Vienna: "We will observe the terms of this treaty just as we have all the former ones." That is what I am most afraid of. I'm no expert on strategic arms, so I can't say whether it's a good treaty or a bad one. I can only judge it from my own experience, which tells me that either the lion skin got hopelessly lost, or perhaps the lion never had one in the first place.

I can already see them shaking their heads in innocent bewilderment and I can hear their indignant voices: "What's all this about a missing skin?"

—Jiri Ruml

Mr. Ruml was born in 1926 in Czechoslovakia. During the "Prague Spring" he was one of the principal commentators on internal political and economic problems for the Reporter, *a leading journal. In April 1968, Ruml was elected an executive of the Prague chapter of the Czechoslovak Journalist Association, where he served until the group was dissolved in September 1969. At the same time he was expelled from the Communist party and dismissed from his job. Ruml was then assigned to heavy construction.*

"This is one hell of a time to tell me you forgot the damn peanuts!"

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Hickory, Dickory, Dock

IF YOU MANAGE to survive the next 20 years and slip into the 21st century, to whom should you give thanks? To the medical scientists, of course, the chemists, the biologists, the neurologists, the researchers, the doctors, and even your neighborhood druggist, who eventually will have to peddle the new products that will cure the thousand natural shocks flesh is heir to.

But you will forget to thank one great benefactor: Not a word of acclaim, not a sound of applause will go to the teams of mice on whom each new medical breakthrough is tested. The mouse has never been appreciated. When Dr. Jonas Salk called for volunteers to help stamp out poliomyelitis, who came scampering to his side to test the efficacy of his new serum? Not your dog, man's best friend, but mice. While your dog was in the parlor sitting up, or playing dead, or fetching your bedroom slippers, the mice were busy at the labs, selflessly and unstintingly donating their time to help stamp out the disease.

The story of how the mice got into the business of prolonging human life is worth the telling. The high position they have attained has a lowly beginning. Back in the 13th century, a certain Pied Piper piped all the mice out of the lush green countryside of downtown Westphalia into the overcrowded suburban areas to find a peaceful haven. But wherever the mice set up homes, the fashionable inhabitants began moving out, leaving our little friends to forage in human-infested slums.

The mice realized that something had to be done to improve their public image. At first they tried to ingratiate themselves by acts of kindness. In one instance, a mouse pulled a thorn out of a lion's paw. This charitable act helped him, but not all mousekind. The frustration of the mice turned to bitterness when people began inciting their cats to destroy the mice. Finally they decided to revolt against the Establishment. They started to beat a path to the very doors of their persecutors. They squealed noisily through parlors, causing terrified, shrieking women to jump onto chairs. They gnawed at ships to make them sink, and as the crew went down, the mice gleefully deserted. Their favorite ploy, according to an old chronicler named Hickory Dickory Dock, was to run up a clock and make it strike one. No matter what the time.

But the best laid schemes o' mice and men gang aft a-gley; their efforts were to no avail. For 300 years mice remained at the nadir of the social ladder. However, late in the 16th century they got their lucky break. It was like a fairy tale.

There was this girl named Cinderella. She was a drudge, ragged and dirty from having to do all the housework. Meanwhile, her two stepsisters were always on the town, going to dances and meeting people in high society. Eventually a good fairy enabled Cinderella to go to the Prince's ball by bedecking her in a dazzling gown and slippers of glass, and turning a pumpkin into a splendid coach. Who do you think drew the coach? A team of six white mice. That's who!

(I realize that there may be those among you who believe that the good fairy changed the mice into a team of white horses. I think you have that confused with the tooth fairy, who used a team of white horses to pull your tooth. But right or wrong, I'm not going to let a fact interfere with the truth of a fairy story and spoil the glory of the mice's hour of triumph.)

What a furor the mice created, prancing and high-stepping their way to the Prince's palace! The town folk who lined the streets had seen coaches, dazzling gowns, and even glass slippers before, but never such a team of white mice in such resplendent royal livery, worthy of a Disney. As the onlookers shouted and applauded, the mice knew they had finally made it.

Their joy was short-lived, however. At midnight, as we all know, the coach turned back into a pumpkin, and the mice turned back into the oblivion of their holes. They wondered to themselves, Where is He who sees with equal eye a hero perish or a sparrow fall? They remained in the dark for many years.

Which brings us to the present era, euphemistically known as the enlightened 20th century. Now again, our tiny friends, dressed in spanking white starched hospital gowns, are at the elbows of our researchers. They are eating, drinking, and smoking God knows what—all for us.

It wasn't an easy decision for the mice to give up their lives helping their age-old persecutors. There were, of course, the usual dissenters who held out at first. They were regarded as rat finks. But when they learned that what the mice were being asked to inhale was hallucinatory, they eagerly joined in the testing of "grass," the other side of which always appears to be greener.

So now you know who are your real best friends, still hard at work to help you survive at least into the 21st century. Which is more than our nuclear scientists can say.

—Goodman Ace

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The people who read this book will end up with your money.

Why? Because the coming inflationary depression will transfer the wealth . . . from some people to others.
This book will teach you how to be a transferee instead of a transferor.

This book wrote today's headlines last January.

How to Prosper During the Coming Bad Years was sent to the printer in November, 1978—and it contains tomorrow's headlines, and next year's. Incredible as it may seem, it forecast, with no "pussy footing" or escape-hatch hedging, the recession which began four months later in March, the meteoric rise of gold and silver prices, the spectacular inflation rates that are now scaring the wits out of us, and the recent energy crisis.

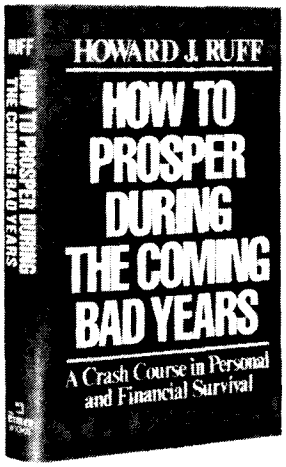
And it told you how to take advantage of the coming economic and political climate to preserve your wealth and even make a great deal of money. If you had invested $10,000 in Mr. Ruff's basic financial survival plan on the publication date of this book, by July 15, you would have been **500%** better off than if you had owned a CD or Treasury bill, and **767%** better off than if you had bought stocks whose performance approximated the Dow Jones industrial average. And because the powerful trends that Howard Ruff has forecast are still in their early stages, there is time to get on board, if you act soon enough.

If you would like a no risk examination of HOW TO PROSPER DURING THE COMING BAD YEARS, simply fill in the coupon and mail it along with your check, or you can use your Visa or Master Charge card. If you don't like the book, just drop us a note saying, "I don't think it's worth the money," and a full refund will be on the way within ten days of the time we receive your request. You don't even have to explain why. And you can keep the book! That's how confident we are that this book will change your life.

Just so you won't feel you are being asked to buy a "pig-in-a-poke," here's a sampling of Howard J. Ruff and his book **How to Prosper During the Coming Bad Years.** Even just reading this ad might make you a lot of money.

Excerpts:

You are reading this book because you are perceptive enough to sense that something is terribly wrong out there and you are one of millions of Americans with a growing sense of unease about the future. The institutions you always trusted are now giving you a queasy feeling. You are making money but you seem to have less, and you know all is not well. I congratulate you for your insight. I share your feelings.



The likely scenario:

1. In the next recession, WHICH WILL HAPPEN SOMETIME SHORTLY AFTER THE PUBLICATION OF THIS BOOK (January 1979), it will appear that recession and unemployment are threatening the public welfare. Washington will react in panic fashion to attack the problem by cranking up the money and spending machine to "stimulate" the economy—a bit of "the hair of the dog that bit us." This will result in a flood of newly created money, which is the engine of inflation. You will see a runaway inflationary spiral, to be followed by another government panic move—price controls.

The inevitable result of price controls is shortages. Milton Friedman has said, "Economists may not know how to stop inflation, but they know how to cause shortages. Simply impose price controls." This will lead to black markets and further breakdown in the respect for law and order on the part of middle class Americans.

Controls will fail. These distortions in the economy, and the dollar floods coming from the printing press, will cause Americans to distrust their own paper money and get rid of it as fast as they can in an orgy of spending, similar to what happened in Argentina when their inflation was running at 800% a year and they were buying everything in sight. Eventually our credit economy will turn into a pure printing press economy.

I'd like to tell you (1) how we came to this brink, (2) why this is the most likely scenario, and (3) what you can do to get through it, and even get wealthy.

". . a time of great opportunity . ."

Borrowers who use borrowed money productively and cautiously to invest in counter-cyclical investments will do just fine. They will pay off their loans with cheap dollars, and build fortunes through leverage.

Those who invest early in chaos or disaster hedges do best of all, especially if they use leverage wisely for those things to which people instinctively turn when the value of paper money is diminishing in an attempt to beat the loss of purchasing power that inflation brings, and in fact, that inflation *is*.

Investors in small town real estate also will do well. The quality of life in large cities will deteriorate, for reasons I'll explain later, and there will be an exodus of middle-class money, talent, and investments to the small towns of America.

Anyone who gets through all this "even with the game" is a winner. There will be incredible bargains in stocks, bonds, real estate and a myriad of other things, which we will discuss later, for those who had the foresight just to preserve their purchasing power.

I will give you a total strategy, a plan that should get you through to the other side in enhanced financial condition.

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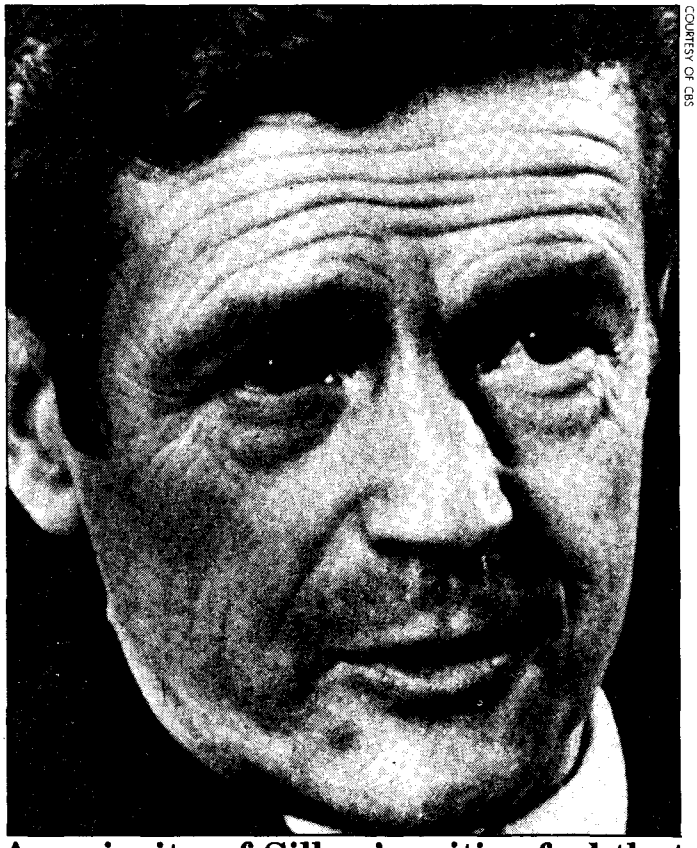
The Teachers and The Tyrant

by Stephen Arons



COURTESY OF CBS

A majority of Silber's critics feel that he has become Boston University's greatest liability.

ON DECEMBER 18, 1979, the scholars and teachers of Boston University put aside their academic pursuits, squeezed themselves into Hayden Hall, and, in their largest faculty assembly ever, voted 457½ to 215½ to urge the dismissal of the university's president, John Silber. This was the faculty's second vote of no confidence in Silber in four years, and it came six weeks after the pugnacious president had initiated proceedings that could end in the firing of five tenured professors who had expressed their support of striking clerical workers at the university.

Believing that Silber's actions constituted "the latest in a pattern of attacks upon civil liberties," Salvador Luria, MIT professor and Nobel Laureate, began circulating a petition calling on the national academic community to condemn Silber. With the emergence of the issue from behind the usually closed doors of university politics, the relationship of faculty and administration reached an unprecedented degree of polarization at the embattled school. "At this point," according to a vice-president of the local chapter of the American Association of University Professors, "the trustees can either fire all the faculty or fire the president." By New Year's Day, over 2,000 professors around the country had signed the petition, indicating that something much more important than jobs at BU is at stake.

John Silber, ex-law student, ex-preacher, Ph.D. in philosophy, and former dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Texas, came to Boston University in 1971. He was a tough-minded, abrasive, intellectually demanding president who recognized that under its surface reputation as a second-rate school, BU had a faculty and an institutional promise which could be mined for academic excellence. Silber knew the times were auspicious for the development of its academic resources, and he sensed that the students, faculty, and trustees were ready for the task. Now, after nearly 10 years, many of his colleagues at the university see his work as a strip-mining operation that has deeply scarred academic life and may have irreparably disturbed the ecology of teaching, scholarship, and learning.

Although Silber's personality aggravates any struggle between president and faculty at the nation's fourth largest private university, BU's problems are the problems that will be faced by all schools of higher education in the Eighties. As inflation, recession, and a projected decrease in college enrollments strain the nation's schools, the techniques and attitudes of industrial management will come increasingly into conflict on the campus with the tradition of faculty governance and the image of the university as an open, "inefficient" center of learning. The question of whether John Silber has rescued or ruined BU will become the question of whether there is a form of economically sound management that is compatible with academia.

During his early years at the university, Silber amassed a record of accomplishments that seemed to put BU on the national map as a place of high-quality interdisciplinary scholarship with a strong fiscal foundation. He helped recruit more than 30 new faculty "stars" whose reputations enhanced the prestige of being at BU even if their appearances did eclipse a few of the existing luminaries. He balanced the operating budget without drawing on reserves, centralized and brought order to the budget-setting process, increased the amount of sponsored (federal and foundation-funded) research, organized the alumni office so that it began raising more sizable donations, instituted cash-management and expenditure controls, and centralized the flow of information about students, staff, and faculty. By 1975, as the national mean Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores of college-bound seniors continued its decade-long decline, the scores of BU's entering freshmen had begun to climb; also, more freshmen were coming from areas other than New York and New England. Silber was a powerful and controversial public speaker and a prolific essayist, and he knew how to market his university. He gained national recognition for himself and BU, which few outside New England had ever heard about, by his advocacy of the Tuition Advance Fund concept (which would allow students to borrow tuition from the government and repay it later as a percentage of personal income).

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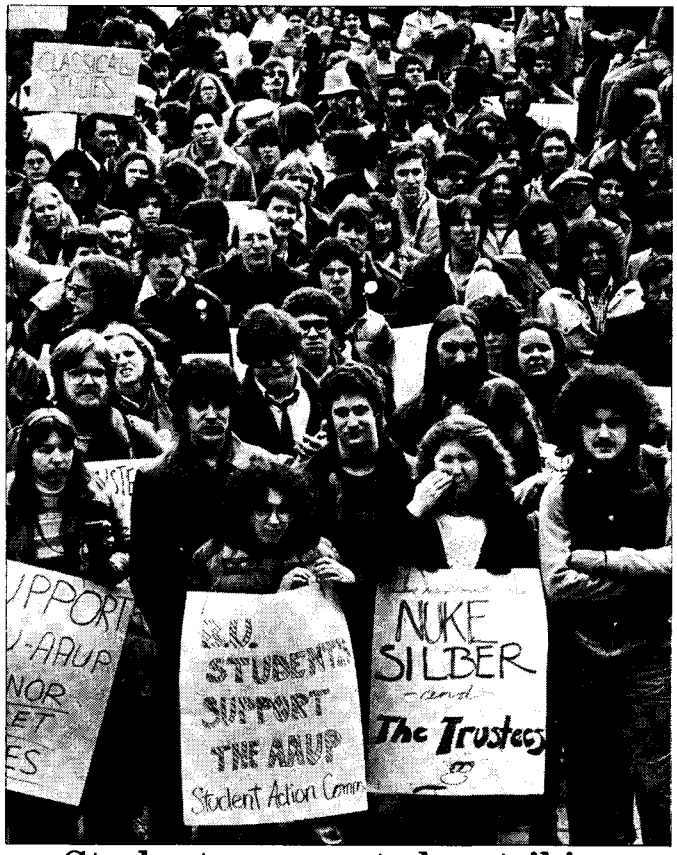
But there was a dark side to Silber's reign. At the university whose most illustrious graduate was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., John Silber was quick to call the police—dogs, clubs, and all—to break up a peaceful student demonstration against the Vietnam War. At the university whose roots in Methodist theology and social activism had earned it a reputation for tolerance and protection of dissenters in the 1950s, Silber interpreted disagreement as disloyalty and showed an unchristian tendency to insult, demean, and undercut his administrators and faculty.

Some of the professors whom he helped recruit began to oppose him. Alasdair MacIntyre, a noted philosopher and university professor whose presence on the faculty Silber takes great pride in, puts it this way: "When I came to Boston University I was impressed by Silber. Now, we have a real problem here. Silber's apparent inability to deal with any issue except on polemical terms is unfortunate." Robert Cohen, one of Silber's earliest supporters, acknowledges that people who worked with Silber regularly "learned to distrust him." The effect, according to one of Silber's former vice-presidents, was that "dozens of administrators left because of Silber's cruel and arbitrary treatment."

By 1976 cracks began to appear in Silber's reputation as a competent and fiscally responsible manager. Hans Estin, chairman of the board of trustees, appointed a committee of eight of Silber's most ardent supporters to review his presidency and report to the board. The members of the review committee, including Estin, were bankers, successful and well-connected businessmen, and corporate lawyers with experience in management. They held confidential discussions with faculty, administrators, and deans. They reached a consensus that the job was too big for one man, "a perception, not an accusation," Estin claims, that "blew Silber out of the sun." The information gathered by the committee included a report by 10 of 13 deans that labeled Silber's financial management a "failure." The budget process was alleged to take place "without guidelines" and in a manner that disregarded the deans' advice, maximized Silber's arbitrary power over the university, fostered "wasteful competition," "concealed income distribution," and made planning and creative scholarship difficult. At about this time the faculty voted 377 to 117 that it had no confidence in Silber.

Silber grew up during the Depression, but neither his congenitally withered arm nor his architect father's prolonged underemployment prevented him from acquiring a voracious appetite for work. In the month between the conclusion of the review committee's work and its presentation to the board, Silber was engaged in a "fight for survival" in which, according to Estin, "he fought as hard and roughly as anyone could." The result of the struggle was an ineffectual reorganization of the top level of the administration and the departure of most of the deans, vice-presidents, and trustees who had dared to question Silber's competence to simultaneously be chief academic officer and manager of BU. Silber had strengthened his control; and along with new board chairman Arthur Metcalf could, like a feudal lord, continue exchanging protection for loyalty. Later, as the soft-spoken, silver-haired Estin gazed at the towers of BU from the 38th-floor window of his office at North American Management Corporation, he observed sadly, "I've never seen another institution where if you raise questions and disagree you are accused of being an enemy."

Perhaps the best example of Silber's resistance to any power that threatens his own has been his handling of faculty unionization. In 1974 the faculty at Boston University began organizing for a representation election that would determine whether the local chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) would become its bargaining agent under the National Labor Relations Act. Silber says that he is opposed to faculty unionization in general because "it utterly transforms the professoriate" and because "you cannot be a first-class teacher and simply worry about how many hours a day you're putting in." He also believes that "the guy who controls the budget is the guy who controls the direction the institution is going to take." So Silber hired Modern Management Methods, a union-busting consulting firm that the *New Republic* recently described as the modern legal and psychological equivalent of the "company thugs" and the "state militia" of the 19th century. MMM was happy to take more than $250,000 from the tuition-dependent university to advise Silber on how to fight staff unions and keep the faculty focused on their own academic specialties.



STOCK, BOSTON, INC./ELLIS HERWIG

Students supported a striking faculty when efforts to form a union were opposed by Silber.

Silber lost; but he didn't accede to the faculty's will. The administration refused to bargain with the newly certified chapter of the AAUP. It took two years and a decision from the Federal Court of Appeals before the university sat down to bargain in 1978. In the spring of 1979 the union reached a tentative agreement with the administration's bargaining team, which included the generally respected provost Harold Hanson, and which reported to John Thompson Larkin, a trustee. On the day before the board of trustees was to ratify the contract, Silber called a rump meeting of some members to discuss what he regarded as flaws in the contract. The next day the trustees voted to ratify subject to clarification. Larkin resigned immediately and Hanson soon after. When, four days later, it became clear that clarification meant renegotiation of a contract already approved by the union membership, the faculty went on strike. Within 10 days compromises were reached, the contract was ratified, and the strike ended.

Still Silber would not concede. In spite of the hundreds of thousands of dollars already spent on legal advice, Silber continued to press the university's claim that department chairpersons were not a proper part of the bargaining unit, a position which, if vindicated, would throw the entire process

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back to the pre-election, unit determination stage. BU's case has been delayed pending the resolution of a Yeshiva University case now before the U.S. Supreme Court. In *NLRB* v. *Yeshiva*, the Yeshiva administration contends that its faculty is management and that therefore the NLRA does not apply. If accepted by the high Court, the argument could "dismantle faculty unionism across the country," according to BU associate provost Jon Westling. BU has filed an *amicus* brief supporting Yeshiva. Language in the BU *amicus* brief, for which Silber takes personal credit, reads as follows:

Thus the faculty as managers select the "raw materials" (i.e., the students), design the manufacturing process (i.e., the curriculum to develop the educated student), manufacture the product (i.e. deliver lectures and seminars), evaluate the product (i.e., give grades to the students), and, if satisfied, recommend the product (i.e., the student) for sale (i.e., for graduation as a holder of degree).

It is ironic that while President Silber has run BU in a way that many faculty members see as substantially reducing their influence, and has fought the means by which they attempt to regain their collegial prerogatives, he can argue that these same teachers have so much power that they are in reality managers instead of employees. And it is a measure of Silber's ambivalence about whether he heads a widget factory or a university that he should attempt to move the justices with the mechanistic imagery of industrial management. The Court almost certainly understands that the problem of applying the NLRA to the university requires a much more accurate image of the faculty and of the educational process.

COURTESY OF CBS

Professor Howard Zinn refused to cross a picket line when BU clerical workers were on strike.

The fall of 1979 brought a new low in university confidence in Silber and a new public awareness of the tragic flaws in Silber's quest for excellence. Silber recalls that when he arrived at BU he knew "that our future depended upon excellence, and that if we did not achieve excellence we would not *have* a future." Few of his critics would dispute this or deny his claims that Boston University has a truly outstanding faculty and excellent programs in, among others, its medical, allied medical, and graduate dental schools, its music, fine arts, history, English, philosophy, development economics, and clinical psychology departments. But events that have come to the surface indicate that Silber's management policies and personal preoccupation with power may be destroying the development he so boldly set out to support.

At times of controversy none of Silber's considerable skills has seemed more essential to his survival in the presidency than his ability as a rhetorician and a manipulator of modern media. In a broadcast about Boston University aired on *60 Minutes* in January, Silber sought to project the image of a tough, angry, unfairly persecuted leader. But Silber's image as the General Patton of academia does not reflect the facts of the last 10 years. If it appeals at all, it is to those who hope that rigidity and bombast are a workable response to a world of endless complexity and frequent frustration.

At the end of October the Silber administration notified five tenured faculty members, Professors Howard Zinn, Fritz Ringer, Caryl Rivers, Murray Levin, and Andrew Dibner, that it was "beginning preliminary proceedings under Article X" of the faculty union contract, which provides for "suspension or termination of faculty appointments." The grounds given by the administration were that the so-called BU-5 had not held classes at their assigned locations during a week in early September when clerical workers were on strike. Zinn, a historian who was jailed six times for acts of conscience during the civil-rights movement, says that he refused to cross the picket line of District 65, UAW, because "we were basically fighting for the same thing—to determine our own destiny in the face of the Silber administration."

Silber claims that invoking Article X is not an attempt to discipline tenured faculty for symbolic expressions of opinion, but his only recourse against what he considers a "sympathy strike" contrary to the faculty contract. Faculty members and the local press regarded the grounds for discipline as trivial and the proceedings as an attack on tenure consistent with Silber's general anti-tenure position.

Within a month of the notification of proceedings, the Luria petition was circulated nationally, a call for a faculty assembly to demand Silber's dismissal was issued, and the faculty began debating the pros and cons of Dr. Silber's draconian decade. At the end of November the Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts released the results of a four-month investigation into a "record number" of complaints about university censorship of students and inhibition of academic freedom. Although Silber refused to cooperate with the inquiry and one of the 16 members dissented because of the failure to investigate other universities, the report concluded that it has "produced information... sufficient to constitute reason to believe that Boston University has violated fundamental principles of civil liberties and academic freedom."

Somewhat earlier in the fall several prominent persons had resigned from the board of trustees or were denied reappointment. Helen Spaulding, a former trustee, said that "Silber has done a great deal for the university" but claims she was denied reappointment because she had "taken a stand against Silber's handling of the faculty union contract." One effect of these departures was to nearly liquidate one of the university's main assets—its ability to use dedicated, well-connected trustees to help raise funds. The resignation of Paul Hellmuth, for example, meant not only that the university had lost someone reputed to be the best fund raiser in Boston, but that the increasing conflict surrounding Silber's policies would probably render other fund raisers ineffective as well. A faculty member who spoke at the assembly said that he had already seen the effects of the turmoil in trying to get federal research support for his work.

The faculty debate before, during, and since the December 18 meeting that called for Silber's dismissal has produced a raft of old and new complaints over Silber's conduct. He has been accused of personal vindictiveness and the granting or withholding of raises as a means of maintaining control over faculty members. His mismanagement in the turnover of deans, vice-presidents, and provosts, his inability to make decisions, his confused handling of budget procedures have all allegedly made academic planning next to impossible and eroded the quality of the curriculum. He has made untenured faculty members unreasonably insecure and unable to do their work by sending out dismissal letters that allegedly made reappointment dependent upon uncertain budget developments. He has denied tenure to the philosophy department's only woman in spite of the recommendations of her colleagues.

After four strikes in one year labor relations were a sham-

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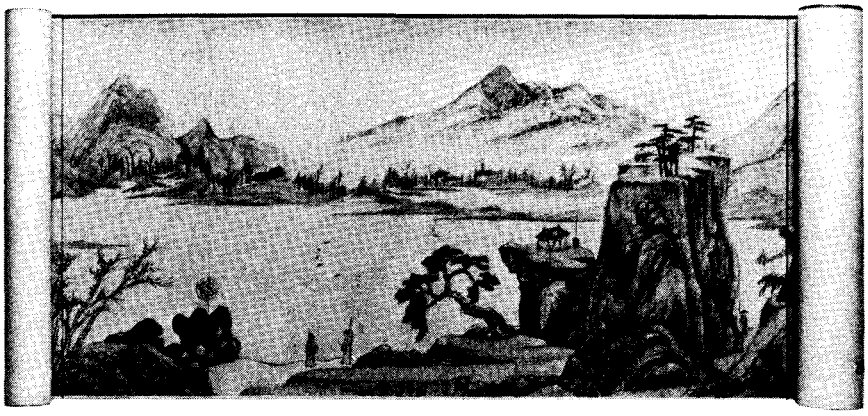

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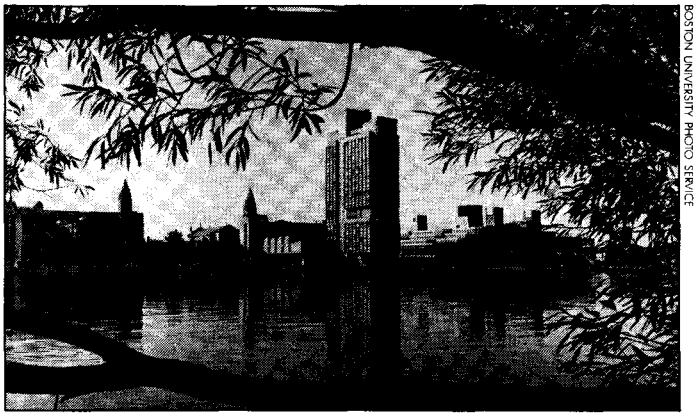
bles. There was great personal anger along with the policy criticisms. The alleged censorship and the BU-5 were evidence of a "reign of terror." Silber believed himself the victim of a "left-wing witch hunt," a charge that the academically conservative MacIntyre describes as "absurd and ludicrous."

In spite of all this, Silber is obviously an intelligent, quick-witted, and endlessly energetic person. There is a trace of personal warmth for him even among his harshest critics, and in spite of his frequently insulting and antagonistic behavior. But it appears that a majority of those involved in Boston University's continual conflict see his presidency as having forfeited its promise and become the school's greatest liability. Asked at the end of a three-hour animated interview whether there were any circumstances under which he would step down from the presidency, Silber replied:

If all the faculty got together and said "You know, John Silber dreamed a glorious dream for Boston University that it should become first rate ... and it was glorious because he seemed to be able to make it possible....But we want to be second rate....We would rather go down the drain into oblivion...and say goodbye to all this, slowly, gracefully, gently, than to have the *sturm und drang* required in order to make this place into a great institution....So please Mr. Silber leave us alone....Trustees, please make John Silber leave us alone." If they say that plaintively enough, bleatingly enough ... then sure I would say "why should I waste my time with a group of people that don't want to have a great university."

Professor MacIntyre does not feel that BU is so dependent on Silber for its vitality and intellectual quality. "Silber has a gift for persuading himself and his opponents than he is the great first cause. I think he is less important than he or they think he is. He's really rather ordinary."



BOSTON UNIVERSITY PHOTO SERVICE

The future of Boston University is in danger unless more sensitive leadership can be developed.

Perhaps because Silber has ignored faculty opinion, refused to cooperate with the Civil Liberties Union, flouted the press, and is seemingly in firm control of his board of trustees, the fear has grown that the president of Boston University is accountable to no one. In early January 1980 it became known that Representative Mel King had introduced legislation in the Great and General Court of Massachusetts to investigate whether the Silber administration had violated its state charter. Silber's reaction was predictable: "There isn't going to *be* an investigation of Boston University!"

Over and above the specific and nonspecific charges, the policy disagreements, the damaged egos, and the widespread polarization, one thing stands out. John Silber's management style has created an unmanageable amount of conflict. Many faculty members are unable to devote their full creative energies to teaching and academic policy. Law professor Banks McDowell, who is chairman of the faculty council and who tries to serve as a mediating force on the campus, admits reluctantly that "I know people who were good teachers and productive scholars who now spend half their time worrying and working against Silber." Some faculty members avoid the persistent conflict and turn instead to their own scholarship so that they can eventually get other employment, with the result, according to McDowell, that "the quality of scholarship is up and the quality of teaching is down."

Others, like philosopher MacIntyre, believe that the faculty has managed to remain an exciting and vital intellectual force in spite of Silber, but that "we need a new president .... John Silber has cut himself off from his roots in the academic community, never has behaved with collegiality, has degenerated in his intellectual standards, has an inability to listen and a deep incoherence in the way he responds to the world. He is just a cost the university cannot afford."

It is Silber's management, and not his personality, that lies at the center of BU's storm. Silber's style has been characterized by his former VP for Academic Support Services, Robert Tobin, who is just completing a doctorate in educational management at Harvard, as "management by an elitist, 'economic man' theory that is control-oriented and implies a 'product' vision which is incompatible with a university." Silber denies that he is "trying to run a university like a corporation," but some of his actions are cut from the same cloth as those of the 19th-century captains of industry. As Harvard sociologist David Riesman, one of the nation's leading experts on higher education put it, "A faculty needs managers who also have educational vision—a rare combination not often found." Silber's educational vision seems impaired by his failure to understand and build his university's major asset—the morale, good will, and creative contribution of the faculty.

State universities like the University of California and the State University of N.Y. at Plattsburg, and private universities such as Stanford and NYU are, like Boston University, already facing the hard choices in the zero-sum game arising from the economics and demographics of the 1980s. The problems of revamping and maintaining the quality of curriculum, providing a vigorous but secure atmosphere for faculty, and enriching the lives of students and the understanding of society are all accentuated by predictions of continued inflation, recession, and a downturn in college enrollments through 1992. These developments will push into the foreground the concept of the university as a business. The question is whether this economic paradigm and the techniques of corporate management can be harmonized with the anarchistic, independent, and antibureaucratic conditions conducive to free inquiry.

Tension and some conflict are neither unknown nor unpredictable as these problems are worked through. College and university presidents, like other leaders, may be blamed for creating the very economic and intellectual problems they are trying to solve. But there is already evidence that presidents who face these dilemmas would like to dissociate themselves from the BU president's methods. John Nason, past president of Swarthmore College and Carlton College and an author of the recently released study "Presidential Assessment: The Challenge of Institutional Leadership" reflects this sentiment: "I view Silber as an embarrassment to higher education and the administration of higher education."

John Silber says, borrowing the military phrase, that Berkeley was the "distant early warning line" of higher education in the 1960s and that "Boston University is probably the DEW line of the Eighties." If it is, the warning to be read from Silber's presidency is clear. The future of the university as a unique and inspirational resource for society is in danger unless more sensitive and sensible leadership is developed for higher education.

Stephen Arons, an attorney and professor of legal studies at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, has joined Saturday Review *as a contributing editor.*

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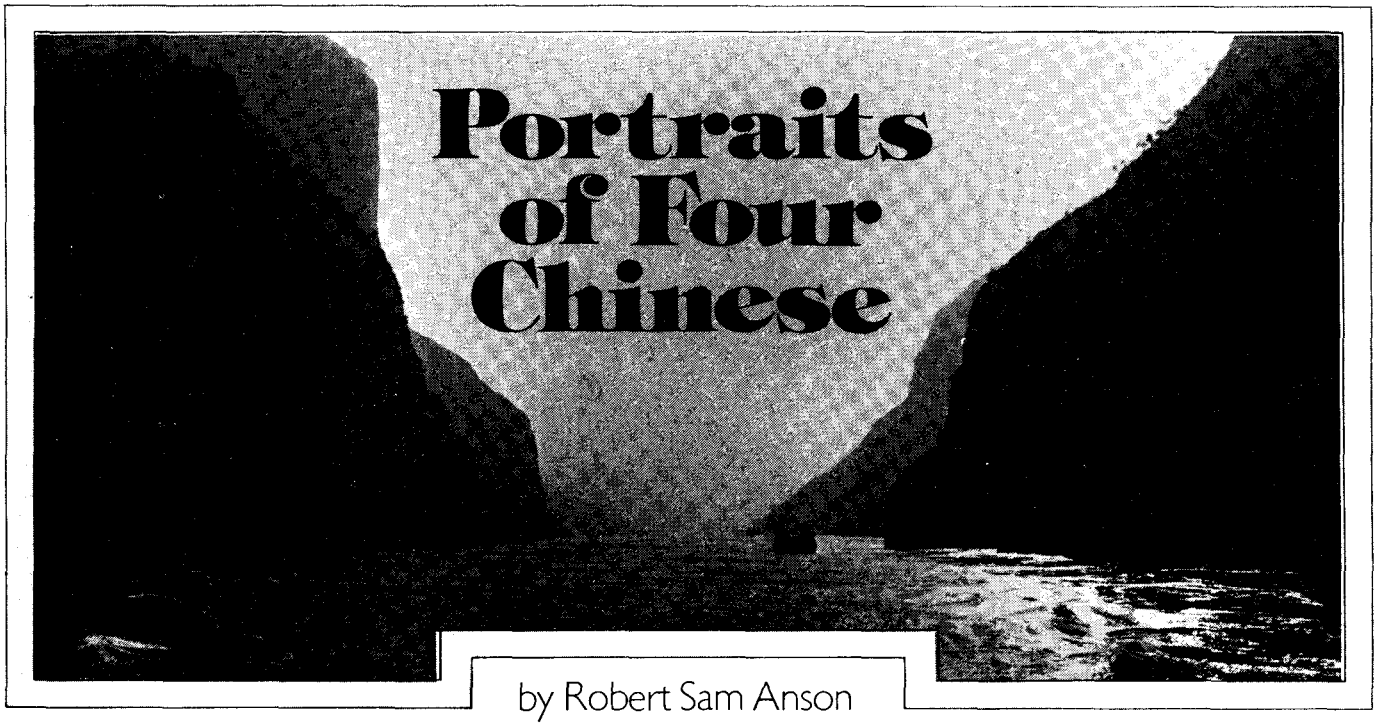

Portraits of Four Chinese

by Robert Sam Anson

SOMETIMES LOST in the blur of information coming out of China these days is the fact that while it is a country of a billion, they are a billion with names, faces, and lives no less unique than our own. Even now, with China officially "open" and Western tourists streaming in, knowing the Chinese as individuals, if only because of the barriers of language and culture, is not easy. But occasionally, with time and patience and a bit of luck, it happens. What follows is a report on a few encounters that occurred in different times and places across China. The three men and one woman depicted here are not typical: Each speaks English, has had the benefit of advanced education, and today holds—or is destined to hold—a position of some responsibility. But, in so many other respects, these four of a billion are reflective of the new China, a land that, face by face, American by American is coming to know.

As punishment for libel Yu Cheng Wen was banished to a commune in Mongolia.

PHOTOS BY JOEL MEYEROWITZ

YU CHENG WEN seldom smiled. It made him different from the other Chinese, who always seemed to be smiling about something. But not Mr. Yu; he was different. He always dressed in Western clothes, for one thing—neat blue blazer, atop a gray V-neck sweater over a meticulously pressed white shirt, open at the collar—a sign, in China, of some distinction and, to his fellow journalists in Peking, some apartness as well. He was shyer than the rest of them, less eager to make friends. It was not so much an aloofness as a natural reserve, a detachment neither Oriental nor Occidental, but uniquely Mr. Yu's own. From the silveriness of his hair and the halting mien with which he carried himself, he looked to be a man in his fifties. Like so much about him, the appearance was deceptive: Yu had not yet reached his fortieth year. But there was more than cosmetics to Mr. Yu's difference. You could see it in his eyes. In those soft, brown, liquid pools, the secret could not be hidden. Mr. Yu had seen too much.

He told his story reluctantly— "the past is best left buried," he said—apologizing for the awkward English, explaining that it was better once, better, as his life had been, when he was young and full of promise. It was 1972, the year of Nixon's visit, and Mr. Yu was settled comfortably as a commentator for *China Reconstructs*. His college education made him an intellectual, a member of a respected, privileged elite. For Mr. Yu the future could not be brighter. He had a wife who loved him, the affection of three growing children, more than enough of material means, and, or so it was said by the cadres, talents that would one day carry him high. While the Cultural Revolution had convulsed the country, he could travel, write what he chose, expose himself to opportunities undreamed of by his worker father. The revolution, he said, had been good to him.

And then, one day, everything changed.

He had gone to bed early the previous evening, exhausted from a long day of writing. It had been, for all his labor, a routine effort, no more than the account of an afternoon spent covering a prominent general's speech. At one point, the general had told a joke. Mao, it went, was the master of Marxism, but not even Mao could best the Ping-Pong champ of China. The story had made a point, and Mr. Yu, laughing with the others, had jotted it down. This morning, he planned to conclude his article with it. He awoke refreshed, smiling at the memory of a vivid dream. In it, he had been singled out for a special honor. His comrades had decided to send him to America. Thinking of it, Mr. Yu felt happy. Perhaps it was an omen.

His comrades, however, were not smiling when he came into the office. He found them frowning as they paged through his notebook. When he approached, one of them angrily waved it at him and demanded, "What's this?"

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gesturing at the characters that recorded the general's jest. "How do you defend such counterrevolution?"

Mr. Yu did his best, but the comrade's mind was closed. Because of his libel, Yu would have to be punished. A commune in Mongolia would correct his poisonous mind. There was no appeal. The train was already awaiting him. His wife would not be told.

A year passed, and then another. From Peking, there was only silence. Mr. Yu toiled away, swilling pigs. The other workers would not speak to him. He was a criminal, a man shunned. Only his pigs befriended him, and he spoke to them each day, whispering in English the words he dared not say. "My sadness was like a stone," he said, remembering. "The burden was too much. I wanted to put it down."

Early one evening, as his guards were leading him back to camp, Yu got his chance. Accustomed to their prisoner by now, the guards let their steps grow longer in their hurry to return to dinner. Mr. Yu found himself alone, standing at the side of a deep, rushing river. "I looked down at the darkness and it seemed to invite me," he said. "I slipped off my sandals and prepared to jump in. I could no longer bear the loneliness. I wanted to take my life." As the waters roiled by, Mr. Yu stood there, frozen in his memories. He saw his wife and children watching him, the face of the comrade who had accused him. In that moment, he decided to live. "It was the first time I had felt true hatred," he said later. "I wanted my revenge. I would live so I could punish them." Bending down, Mr. Yu wedged out a huge rock, hoisted it over his head, and hurled it into the river. "Die," he shouted, tears streaming down his face. "You die for me."

It was five years from that moment until now, and only months since the end of Mr. Yu's banishment. His wife and children, now teenagers, had waited for him. Some of his old friends, however, were missing; a few had killed themselves, others had been murdered. The boss who had sentenced him had disappeared as well, gone to meet his fate with the Gang of Four. It did not matter. Mr. Yu had lost his taste for revenge. Standing in a small lounge, where Chinese now danced with Americans to the sounds of the Bee Gees, Mr. Yu parted his lips in a sad, little smile and shook his head. "What fun they are having," he said. "In my day, they would call this counterrevolutionary." He watched an attractive young guide walk by, called out, and asked her to dance. "She is my new friend," he smiled, moving out to the floor. He looked back over his shoulder, to say a final word. "She was one of them. A Red Guard." The music played on, deafening and shaking. It was a fox-trot.

'These days we can read anything from America. But don't send *Playboy*.'

THE YOUNG MAN beckoned urgently. Tugging at the American's sleeve, he gestured toward the subterranean doorway of the ancient observatory, on the outskirts of Nanking, and beckoned to the foreigner to follow him. Mystified, the American complied, and within moments was conveyed to the first chamber of a vault. The student produced a key and unlocked the door. Beyond, another passageway and another door, where the process was repeated, and beyond that barrier, still another, until some time later they were in the cool of a damp, darkened room deep beneath a hillside. Only then did the young Chinese explain. "I am a student," he said in fractured English. "There is a project I need help with. My class meets in the hour." With that, he reached into his tunic and extracted a composition book, inside of which he had laboriously copied out several pages of English sentences. "In the city, the people were rich," read one. "Before liberation, there were few doctors in the countryside." The student, a pupil at the local school, looked anxious. "Please," he implored, "it is important that I am correct. Are they right?" Assured that they were, the student breathed an almost audible sigh of relief. "Learning English is so hard," he said wearily. "It is all those goddam prepositions."

They arranged to meet afterward, in a teahouse not far from the American's hotel. The American had suggested the hotel itself, but the student had demurred, explaining with a note of embarrassment that Chinese were forbidden to enter even the hotel grounds without special permission. "It is not so bad," he added quickly. "It was not too long ago that I wouldn't have been allowed to talk to you at all."

The American was already seated when the student arrived late that afternoon, flushed by the four-mile run from school. A bicycle would have brought him sooner, he admitted, but bicycles in China were expensive, $300 U.S. or more, the equivalent of six months of a professor's wages, and thus for him, a student, an extravagance.

Tea and sweet cakes were brought, and even while the liquid was still steaming, the first of the student's questions tumbled out. "Tell me about Mark Twain. He was a famous writer in your country, was he not? And Jack London, I would like to know about him. I have read his work, some of Ernest Hemingway, too. Do you read them still?" When the American replied yes, along with many other authors, the student regarded him enviously. "You are so lucky to have so many books. Here we have...." He paused, pushing a copy of *Famous English Writers* across the table. The publishing date read 1931. "We have just this. It is useful, and we can borrow others, but I fear that it is not—what is your word ?—representative." The American surveyed the contents, a speech by Patrick Henry, an essay by Emerson, a short story by Melville, and agreed that, indeed, it was not. "But when I get home," he offered, "I'll send you some others. *The Old Man and the Sea*, perhaps, by Hemingway, and some Fitzgerald. I'll make it an assortment. You can receive them, can't you?"

"Oh, yes," the student replied brightly. "These days, we can read anything from America. But, please, don't send *Playboy*." The student smiled sheepishly, "the authorities wouldn't like that." He bowed his head and added, "I think I would be embarrassed, too." The mention of sex started the student off on another tangent. How was it, he inquired, that the American government permitted things like *Playboy* to be published? Wasn't the country scandalized? Informed that there were many publications in the United States beside which *Playboy* paled, the student's jaw sagged noticeably. "I don't know what the world is coming to," he said, finally.

There was a silence for a moment, and the student shifted uncomfortably, as if fearful that he had offended his foreign friend. When he resumed talking, it was to recite all the things he found wonderful about America, its riches, its technology, its cinema, its literature. He was trying to know them all, he said earnestly. Every night he and his classmates listened to the *Voice of America*, especially its program in English, and devoured every misplaced magazine

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they could lay their hands on. "I have even seen your movies," he announced. Charlie Chaplin in *Modern Times*. It was in Nanking not long ago, and I saw it twice."

The student returned to sex. He had heard a rumor, he said, a story so fantastic, it could not possibly be true, and yet, bound by his curiosity, he had to ask. "Are there," he asked tentatively, "homosexuals in the United States?" The moment the question was out, the student's expression showed that he wished he had not asked it. The very suggestion of something less than completely manly about the American's homeland was a grave insult. The American sensed his unease, and patted him reassuringly on the arm. "That's okay," he laughed, "you can ask anything you want." The answer lingered in his mouth a second, while he debated what to do: tell the truth, and shock the poor student all the more, or politely lie. He chose to tell the truth. Yes, he answered, there were; in the city of San Francisco alone, there were nearly 200,000 of them, a third of the voting population, and they were a power bloc to be reckoned with. In New York, where he was from, the total was 800,000 or thereabouts, and they constituted a subculture all their own. The rest of America, he concluded, was not much different; it was said by researchers who figured out such things that as many as one in 10 Americans were homosexual.

The student was stupefied. "Incredible," he said. "In China, we have none."

Diplomatically, the American decided to let the last remark slide. He took out his pen and jotted a few notes on a pad, writing with the paper positioned horizontally, his left hand filling up the blue lines with tight, scribbled strokes. The student bent over the table to watch the writing more closely. Again, his jaw began to sag. "Oh, it's the way I hold the paper," the American joshed, noticing the student's fascination. "No," the student said. "It's your hand. You're writing with your *left* hand. In China, no one writes with their left hand. No one." The student drew back, considering the events of the last few moments. He shook his head. "What a strange country America is," he said in genuine amazement. "*Playboy* and homosexuals and left-handers. We have none of them here."

Thanks to the Cultural Revolution, Mr. Lee's promising career stalled.

MY NAME IS Mr. Lee," the smiling tour guide announced to his charges. "There are many Lees in China. It is like Jones in your country." He smiled again, pleased with the cultural connection he had made. "And now," he said, "I shall conduct you to the Mausoleum of Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, the father of the Chinese Revolution. It was built by the Nationalists in 1928 and is their finest achievement." He smiled again, more pointedly this time. "Here in Nanking, we say it is their *only* achievement."

Mr. Lee, like so many other bright, young Chinese of his age (early thirties) and education (English, Shanghai University), worked for the China International Travel Service. It was a good job, he said. There was always the chance to practice his already excellent English and glean from visiting "foreign friends" the latest tidbits of life in the United States, which plainly was his passion. His employment made him something of a local celebrity in his working-class neighborhood. "They see me with all these foreigners and they assume that I must be important," he explained. "They know the government must trust me not to defect."

Lee's life was not entirely carefree. After three years of "graduate study" working as a peasant, an experience he clearly loathed, Lee was assigned to Nanking by the government. And, as far as Mr. Lee was concerned, Nanking, whatever its glories a thousand years ago, was a cultural backwater. Not to mention hot. "You know how hot it is there?" he asked. "Furnace city, that is what we call it. The government gave me a choice. Go to Wuhan or go to Nanking. Both hot as hell. Some choice."

Lee had many complaints and none more vehement than the Cultural Revolution. It had been a disaster, Lee said heatedly—dismissing his own part in it as "the typical folly of a young man"—not only for his country but for himself as well. He had found himself, "a city boy," as he put it, shipped off to the countryside. The work he had been assigned—tilling in the rice paddies from sun-up to sun-down—had been backbreaking and mindless. Worst of all, he had been continually judged not on his toil—"once I got the hang of it, I was a good peasant"—but on his devotion to Mao. Good revolutionary that he was, Lee had read the "Little Red Book" backward and forward, indeed, consigned long sections of it to memory. That was not the trouble. The trouble, as his overseers saw it, was that Lee did not practice what he learned. His roommate was precisely the opposite. He was, Lee said, "a terrible worker, a complete incompetent." But the roommate was savvy. Long after his sandals had worn out, he refused to throw them away, a demonstration, he said, of his commitment to Mao's thought. The cadres were impressed, and Lee's roommate was held up as an example of the best of Chinese youth, while Lee, who stubbornly insisted on wearing good sandals, got only the dregs of the work. "What rubbish," he said angrily. "What nonsense! What do politics have to do with growing rice?"

The situation had gotten better since the downfall of the Gang of Four, Lee conceded, and Chairman Hoa and Vice-Premier Deng Xiao-Ping were truly "good and able men." But matters were still not as Lee would have liked them. "It is hard to do your best when you are not sure what is coming next," he said. "We have had too many revolutions and so-called revolutions. What we need now, what my neighbors want, is calm. Peace and quiet. How is a man to do his work if he always has to worry that he is taking the correct political line?"

Perhaps there wasn't a solution, Lee admitted, at least not in his lifetime. Whatever his neighbors might think, he knew only too well that, thanks to the Cultural Revolution, his once-promising career had stalled. The hope now, he said, was that the next generation would avoid the mistakes he had made. He had a baby girl—"I am a proud papa," he said glowingly—and the same high hopes he once had for himself were now vested in her. Had she been a boy, he conceded, the path might be easier. Yes, he said, he would like to have a son, but he and his wife, in accordance with the Party's wishes, were stopping with one child. "The subsidy stops, you know, when you have two," he pointed out. "With a billion people, it makes sense."

It was a rare concession from Mr. Lee, and, as it turned out, a temporary one. As the tour wore on through the cultural and industrial attractions of Nanking, and he found that he had discovered a willing ear, he returned to his complaints again and again. "These great, eloquent politicians with all their fine, false words," he said wearily late one

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night. "No one wants to hear them. They are a big joke. Everyone laughs at them. They mimic them." He looked up, his face brightening only slightly. "I was watching television with some of my friends not long ago," he recounted. "And, as usual, there was a politician on. We knew what he was going to say and, as he said it, we were saying it with him: 'Look what our brave comrades suffered during the great Long March. Surely, we can do better.' Ridiculous! What does the Long March have to do with our problems today?"

"I talk too much," he sighed. "Even the sound of my own voice tires me. But there is so much to be done." He looked at his American friend sharply. "You wonder why the people follow you wherever you go?" he asked, referring to the procession of Chinese that trailed in every tourist's footsteps. "They look at you because you are different. Your hair is curly and yellow. The clothes you wear are brightly colored. But there is more to your difference than that. You have what we do not. You have what we want. We will get it someday, in spite of all these politicians. You come back then. Come back when we are developed and strong. Then we will not stare at you. Then we will be equal."

SHE STOOD aloof at first, almost frosty, not at all the typical tourist guide. On first encounter, and for many after that, Yi Hsiao-Li exuded toughness.

Not surprising, for Mrs. Yi had been a Red Guard, an experience for which she had no apologies. In body and soul, Yi was a child of the revolution.

The trouble was these Americans. Her study of Marx and Mao had not prepared her for the unlikely task of hand-holding 30 of these foreign devils across the face of China. Europeans, she had experienced. But these strange Americans with their blunt rebellious ways were something else entirely.

They did not take directions as well as the Europeans did, they asked more questions, told more jokes, refused, she sometimes thought, to take her mission seriously. It took all of her will to brace herself against them.

Had Mrs. Yi had her way on this cruise up the Yangtse, things would have been different. The Americans would not have been permitted to go wandering off, as they were always doing, poking their long, Western noses into houses, forever disrupting the carefully planned schedule Peking had laid down. All the Americans cared about, she thought, were snooping and shopping. They would buy anything, ask anything, however impolite. Not even sex was out of bounds. They pried into her privacy, demanding the details of her courtship, insisting that she tell

Doris Day and Ted Kennedy, freeways and fast-food were no mystery to Mrs. Yi.

them whether she held hands or had kissed. When, at length, she stonily told them no, blushing at the impropriety of the very notion, they pressed on all the more, as if determined to leave not only her work, but her life itself in chaos.

And so she retreated. While others handled the briefings and answered the endless queries, Mrs. Yi stood apart and watched. She was perplexed, unsure how she was expected to relate to a people so unlike any she had encountered. Nothing had prepared her for this. It was not that she was lacking in sophistication. For she had already been to the West, on a brief interpreting trip to England, and she had read extensively about the United States. She had studied its politics, schooled herself in its foibles, divined, as best she could, from 12,000 miles remove, everything there was to know about it. Doris Day and Ted Kennedy and freeways and fast-food were no mystery to her; her texts had mentioned them all. What they had not prepared her for was meeting the reality face-to-face. It chilled her.

The first signs of a thaw revealed themselves after a week. Until then, she had appeared every morning togged out in a drab gray suit. But when she arrived at breakfast this morning, it was different. The gray trousers were still there, but now in place of the usual matching top was a stylishly cut plum-colored jacket. The attire drew appreciative smiles and, for the first time in days, Mrs. Yi smiled back. It was the beginning. The next morning her costume was further brightened with the addition of a nylon blouse printed in a gay pattern of old-fashioned bicycles. Again there were smiles, and again, she smiled back, this time a trace more easily. The third day the transformation was complete: plum jacket, nylon blouse, and now a black-and-white polka dot silk scarf knotted about her throat. "Mrs. Yi," one of the Americans exclaimed, "you look positively beautiful." In that instant, the ice collapsed.

She blossomed after that. Each day seemed to bring a new closeness and added warmth. If she was not trading jokes with the Americans, she was learning, albeit dubiously, about disco. "Forget your head," one of them commanded one evening on the dance floor, as the ship headed into the blackness of Middle China. "Get your body into it. Let your soul take over." Within moments, the well-protected Mrs. Yi, who only days before seemed to lack soul, was boogying with the best of them.

It went on from there. She couldn't seem to get enough of the Americans, nor they of her. By now, all the barriers were down. She chatted like a schoolgirl about her life, showing pictures of her child, talking proudly of her husband, retelling her adventures as a vanguard of the revolution. She seemed, in those moments, not only close to the Americans, but one with them.

One night, as the cruise was drawing to a close, she gathered her new friends to watch the rising of the full moon over the Yangtse. All at once, the still air was cut with a perfect contralto. It was the bashful Mrs. Yi. "Home, home on the range," she sang. The Americans took up the tune, and when it was finished, another. "The East Is Red" this time, Mrs. Yi in the lead, then "America the Beautiful," and, finally, with the pale moon abursting, "We Shall Overcome."

The last night on board, the Americans had a surprise party for her. There were more songs—the "Internationale" conducted by a Vietnam veteran—toasts of eternal friendship, and even a presentation. As Mrs. Yi opened her gift, a cashmere sweater donated by one of the ladies, she mumbled, "but you shouldn't have," and quickly held up her hand to shield her eyes. When she brought it down, the Americans applauded. There was a silence and, painfully, Mrs. Yi struggled to speak. "When we began," she said, "I did not know you. You were a foreign people. I suppose...." She trailed off, caught herself, then resumed. "What I want to say is that, in the beginning, I felt alone. I missed my family. Now we are leaving, and I will miss you. Because you have become my family, too." And then, quietly, unashamedly, Yi Hsiao-Li began to cry.

Robert Sam Anson, a New York freelance writer, has traveled extensively in the People's Republic of China.

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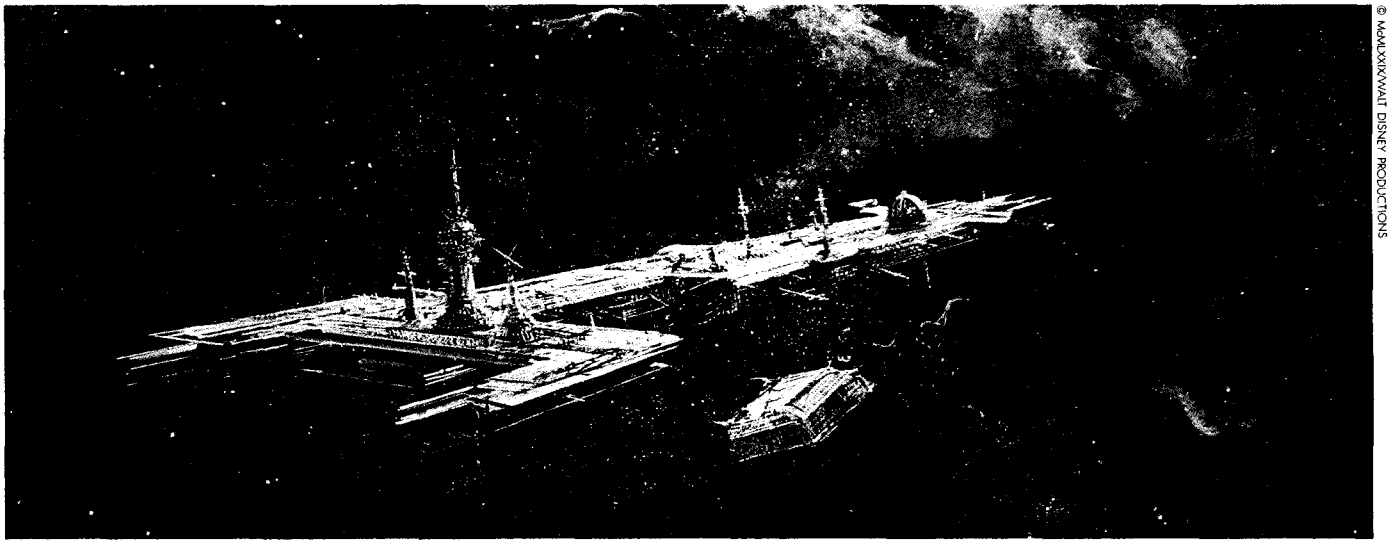
Sci-Fi Flies High

by Charles Nicol



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The spaceship Cygnus entering the black hole in Disney's journey into SF—Glimpses of heaven and a quite literal hell.

SCIENCE FICTION has replaced the spy film—which replaced the western—on the motion picture screen. The enormous success of *Star Wars* signaled a revolution in popular taste on which the studios have been quick to capitalize: This past Christmas they gave us, instead of yet another James Bond thriller, *Star Trek* and *The Black Hole*. The Christmas offering in 1978 was *Superman* (the story of a flying Alien who turns into syrup when heated), the year before, the well-crafted *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. And the home screen is not far behind. While this year's late entry in the James Bond sweepstakes, *A Man Called Sloane*, ran dead last in the ratings, *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century* more than held its own; *The Martian Chronicles* was a mini-series; even PBS gambled heavily, trotting out Ursula K. LeGuin's *Lathe of Heaven* as its "first major" speculative-fiction movie. Yet there are peculiar limitations in all these ventures, reflecting the strange history of SF in the United States. To understand what is happening today in the visual media we need to look at the idea of science fiction itself and its 50-year struggle to escape from the dank American subculture of pulp magazines and drugstore paperbacks.

SF has always been concerned with science in the broadest sense. Current novels explore not just robots, relativity, computers, and cloning, but the realms of ecology, politics, anthropology, and linguistics. At its best, SF faces a number of mankind's central concerns: on the one hand, the fabric of reality and the mechanics of society; on the other, the limitations of the rational mind and the confrontation with the Alien, the incomprehensible stranger who also dwells within us. With our increasing estrangement from our own technology, science has itself become the Alien for many, and the rising popularity of SF testifies to the need it fills.

SF fills other needs as well: It is the only popular genre to be implicitly or explicitly religious. This interest in transcendence ranges from the sublime to the subbasement: from the Nietzschean prophecies of *2001* (beginning with its first moments, when orbs roll in the heavens to the music of *Also Sprach Zarathustra)* to the rather endearing Force of *Star Wars*, tended by its Arthurian priesthood of Jedi Knights; from the Aliens bathed in light of *Close Encounters* to the pretentious biblicality of *Battlestar Galactica*, an ill-starred vehicle that fled through the ether in disarray all last season and this past month finally found Earth. *The Black Hole* climaxes with glimpses of heaven and a quite literal hell.

Favorite campus novels of the last decade have included Hermann Hesse's *Magister Ludi* (also called *The Glass Bead Game)*, in which monastics of the future meet to play an enormously complex computer-simulation game for glory; Robert Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land*, where the sole survivor of the first Martian expedition returns to Earth with new-found powers, including *grokking*, which he shares with his followers in a religious awakening; Kurt Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle*, where the self-made holy man Bokonon explains that the only proper response to the end of the world is "thumbing my nose at You Know Who"; and J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, which is not really SF but shares much common ground, as half-men (hobbits, in other words) battle the Dark Powers in a gently religious fantasy. Academic courses in SF (now offered at more than 200 colleges and universities) frequently include Walter M. Miller's *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, in

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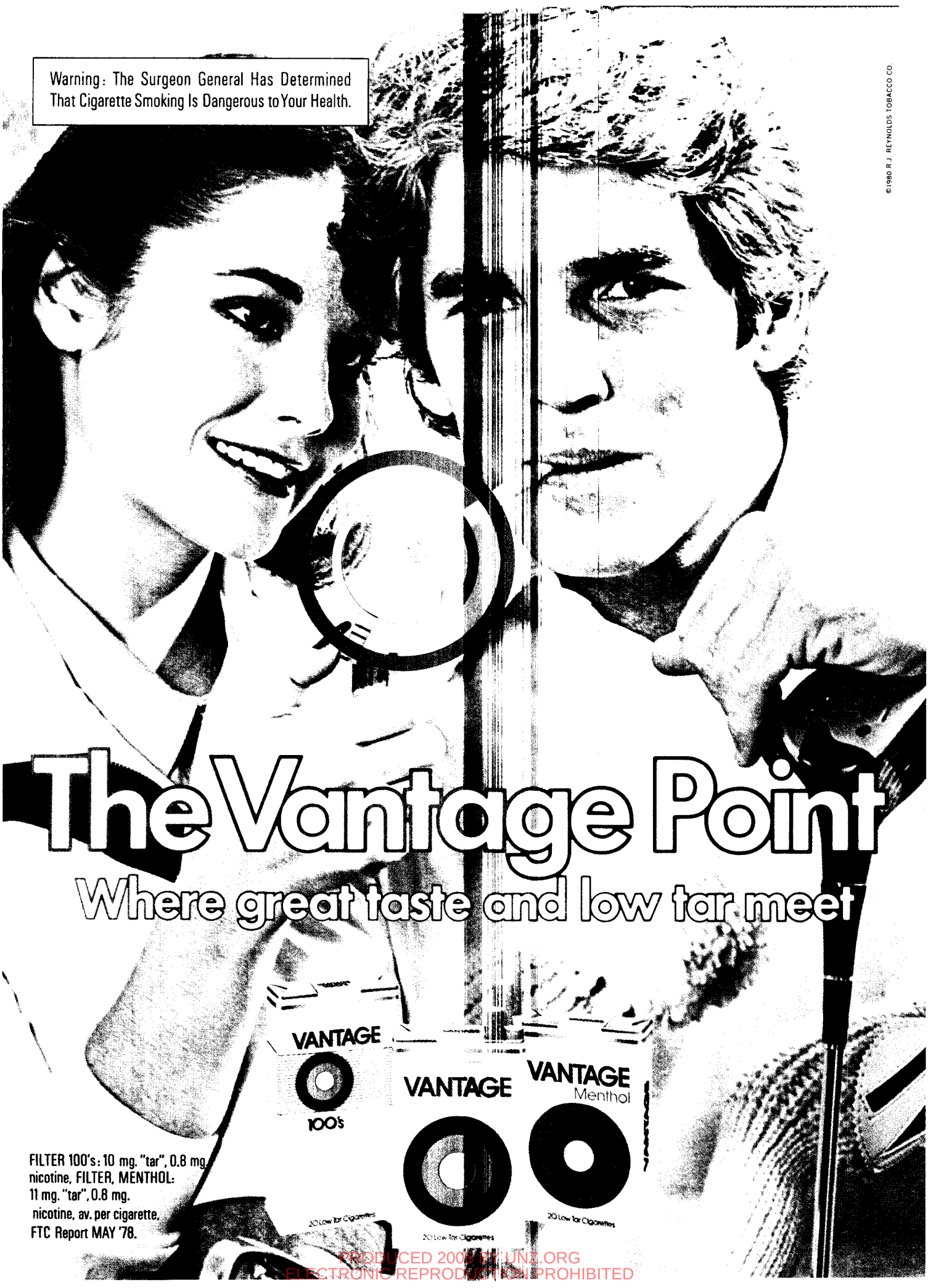
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which post-holocaust monasteries treat the surviving scientific artifacts as religious icons.

This celestial focus has prompted the SF writer Joanna Russ to suggest that science fiction is a unique phenomenon to which current literary criticism is inapplicable, a phenomenon akin not to other contemporary writing but to medieval literature. She finds it confident of its own values, didactic in nature, and concerned with Everyman rather than the Individual:

> Science fiction, like medieval painting, addresses itself to the mind, not the eye .... Thus the science fiction writer can portray Jupiter as easily as the medieval painter can portray Heaven; neither of them has been there, but that doesn't matter. To turn from other modern fiction to science fiction is oddly like turning from Renaissance painting with all the flesh and foreshortening to the clarity and luminousness of painters who paint ideas. For this reason, science fiction, like much medieval art, can deal with transcendental events. Hence the tendency of science fiction towards wonder, awe, and a religious or quasi-religious attitude towards the universe.
> ("Towards an Aesthetic of Science Fiction," *Science-Fiction Studies*, July 1975)

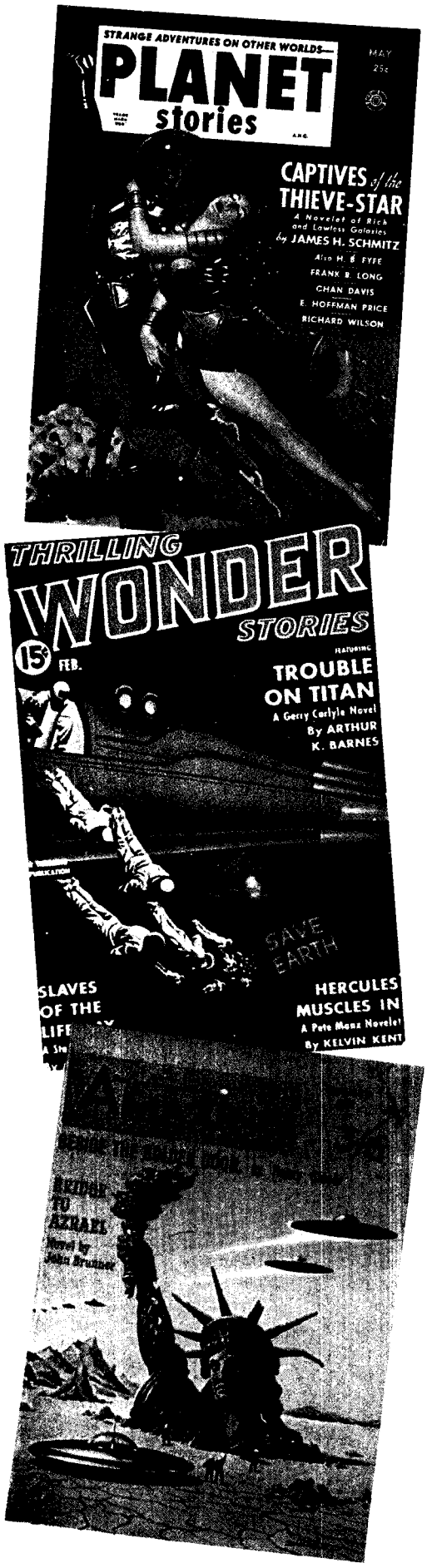
Her argument is well observed and persuasive. It explains the unexpected affinities between American SF readers and those fine Oxford medievalists and Christian apologists, Tolkien and C. S. Lewis. It reminds us of the joyfully innocent names SF pulp magazines used to have: *Amazing Stories*, *Astounding Science Fiction*, *Marvel Science Stories*, *Thrilling Wonder Stories*. But this uncritical sense of awe was also a severe limitation that kept our SF juvenile.

To remind ourselves how bad the old pulps really were, we need go no further than Mars. At the beginning of our century it was scientifically respectable to conjecture that Mars was inhabited, particularly after the careful observations and widely published speculations of the astronomer Percival Lowell. In England in 1898, H. G. Wells wrote *The War of the Worlds*, a masterpiece that showed the inadequacy of our proud technology to deal with the Alien. But in brash America, John Carter easily conquered Martians with giant leaps and swordplay in a series of pulp novels by Edgar Rice Burroughs. The first and best, *A Princess of Mars*, appeared in the pulps in 1912, in book form five years later. Burroughs's naiveté peopled Mars with four-armed men, six-legged horses, and women who laid eggs, yet this puerile view of the red planet remained locked in the popular imagination until finally offset in 1950 by Ray Bradbury's lovely *Martian Chronicles*—perhaps the first consciously literary work of American science fiction. These delicate, loosely connected stories could have made a delightful season of half-hour dramas on TV. Instead, they have been brutally forced into the epic format of three consecutive two-hour programs—something on the order of *Roots*. Great care was taken with some of the stories, but butterflies knotted together on a string don't fly well.

In the 1940s, the newly invented comic books drove most pulp magazines out of business by taking over their readership (millions of comics went to war with the GIs). But the SF magazines had developed a more sophisticated and specialized audience and consequently were among the few pulps to survive. They had introduced hard science in crudely dramatized novels by honest-to-god scientists, and republished the scientific romances of Jules Verne and the careful speculations of Wells. Their readership found no satisfaction in the simplicities of the comics. Indeed, the rise of more crude forms of popular entertainment purged the pulps of their own inanities: Readers who craved BEMs (bug-eyed monsters) abandoned hard science for radio, the comic books, the comic strips of Buck Rogers and Flash Gordon, and the movie serials of the Saturday matinees where Buster Crabbe aimed his ray-gun at fat rockets that swung lazily overhead, emitting sparks and the drone of buzz saws.

Much of our supposed SF in the visual media today is nostalgia for this silly stuff. *Star Wars* was less science fiction than a loving evocation of old movies, and while most of these were Saturday serials, the final battle sequence seems stolen frame by frame from the terrific ending of *The Bridges at Toko-Ri*, a flying epic from the Korean War. Apparently to obtain an equivalent for the river canyon and its anti-aircraft batteries, director George Lucas gouged a giant groove around the belly of the Death Star. *Buck Rogers* on television is more deliberate nostalgia, and even has cameo appearances by Buster Crabbe himself. My children and I eagerly await next season's continuation, just as we await with impatience this spring's *The Empire Strikes Back*, but there is a limit to one's appetite for juvenilia, and no future in the past. Man does not live by candy alone. The future of visual SF depends on the screenwriters adopting the scientific attitude, just as American pulp magazines once did. But more than this, they must be able to criticize that perspective, measuring science against the great rule of our humanity.

Screenwriters often miss the essence of SF. The first great SF novel, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, written 160 years ago, has been through countless screen adaptations without ever being understood. Mary Shelley knew that science is morally ambiguous, a blind, visionary force. Then as now, it seemed



The names of these SF pulps reveal an innocence that kept American SF juvenile for years.

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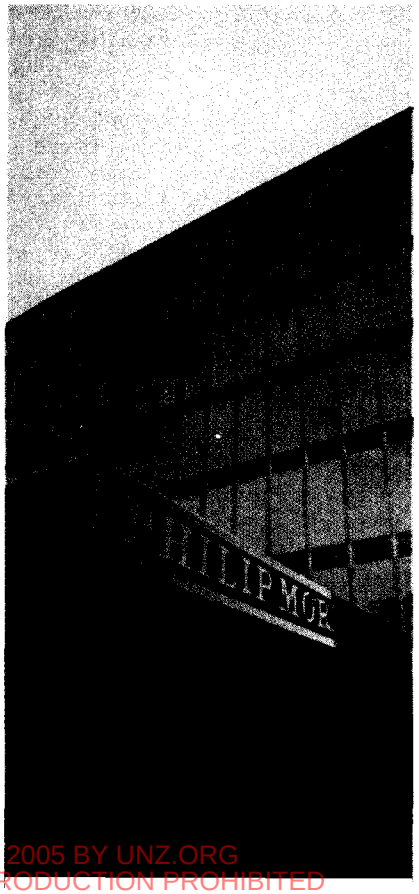
This is one of our hometowns: Lausanne, Switzerland

Lausanne brin



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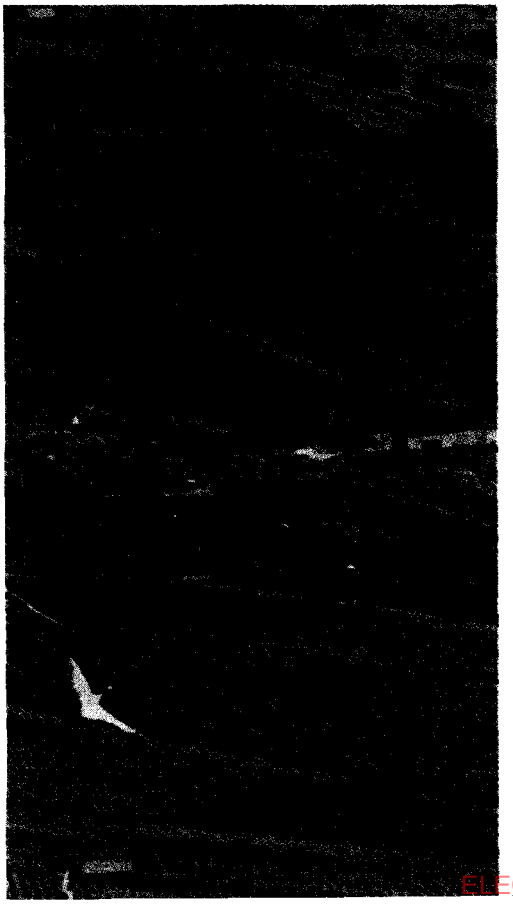
gs it all together.



It was here that the Celts brought together Western Europe's first great culture. The Romans came and made it an international crossroads. The Middle Ages left its faith in the soaring arches of the 700-year-old Cathedral. And all of it lives here still.

The Lausannois have lost nothing that they liked in all their millenia of living here. Whatever pleased them, however contradictory, they kept and molded into something uniquely their own: Celtic hospitality, Roman internationalism, medieval pageantry and modern functionalism. The terraced cobblestone streets live comfortably with modern highways that bring travelers from all of Europe, and outdoor markets not much changed from the Middle Ages survive compatibly with modern markets of banking, finance and international trade.

It is a city that unites, a crossroads that brings people and ideas together—for international businessmen and pleasure-seeking tourists alike. Hotel keepers from around the world come here to study the distinctive Lausanne art of making the traveler welcome—and find, to their dismay, that part of the magic lies in the incomparable setting of vineyard-clad hills sloping down to serene blue lake (Lac Léman to the Lausannois, never Lake Geneva) and the towering Alps beyond.

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Photographs by Marcel Imsand of Lausanne

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about to unlock the secrets of life and the universe. There were startling implications in the discovery that the current from a galvanic battery would cause a dead frog to kick its legs, and that the same mysterious current could fly from the skies down a kite string. The key at the end of Benjamin Franklin's string seemed the key to everything. When Dr. Frankenstein succeeds in creating life—or, rather, re-creating it—Mary Shelley explores the deep ambivalence of his accomplishment. Substitute for Frankenstein's Creature any more recent scientific advance—atomic fission, rocketry, recombinant DNA research—and this double-edged sword still holds its temper and its bite. What remains constant is the drama of the terrible relationship of Frankenstein and his personal Alien, their deep affinities and their inability to escape each other. All of this is at the core of science fiction.

But movies have simplified this immortal conflict, trivializing it into nonexistence, dividing these characters off into meaningless monsters and mad scientists. The mad scientist of horror films is, of course, a kind of shorthand for the inhuman potential of science, but this shorthand merely symbolizes a truth it refuses to explore. In better films, the Frankenstein syndrome appears again and again, with madman and monster seeking each other under various guises. For instance, in a fine SF chiller of the mid-Fifties, Howard Hawks's *The Thing From Another World* (adapted from *Who Goes There?* by John W. Campbell, the editor who put hard science into the pulps), an Alien and his flying saucer were discovered frozen in the Arctic ice—the same ice into which Frankenstein's Creature disappeared in Mary Shelley's novel. Just before the Alien was melted into oblivion by high voltage, he crushed the misguided scientist who tried to save him. In last year's *Alien*, the spaceship's Science Officer (in other words, the scientist—Spock created the position on the *Enterprise* and now it seems to have spread through the fleet) tries to protect *his* murderous Alien. Significantly, this scientist turns out to be a robot. Human values and all, he is dismantled by the crew.

Robot is a word invented by the Czech SF writer Karel Capek. SF created the concept as well, obviously a necessary idea. But the robot and its creator often replay the Frankenstein-Creature drama. The current *Black Hole* features Maximilian Schell as a mad scientist who builds robots incorporating his former crew members (the ghost in the machine) and one master robot (named Maximilian also, as though he were a double for the actor rather than the character, Dr. Reinhardt). This robot first crushes its master and then merges with him as they descend into the Black Hole, apparently for eternal damnation.

Martians made epic in the NBC mini-series.

The Black Hole is the most ambitious project of the Disney Studios in a long time, and their first film to get a PG rating rather than a G. Although not very successful, it reflects one of their first noncartoon feature films, the mid-Fifties *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, in which another mad scientist-captain also went down with his ship. James Mason had a better-trimmed beard as Captain Nemo than does Schell as Dr. Reinhardt, and *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* was a quite faithful version of the original Jules Verne novel, complete with the dark ambiguities of the hero who meant his marvelous submarine as an instrument of hope but used it as an engine of destruction. The evils of mankind that he hated were mirrored in his own person. The *Nautilus* was his Creature, his double, and they died together. It was Verne's best novel, Disney's best film with actors, and an SF model to remember.

COURTESY OF ABC

One of Battlestar Galactica's *evil Cylons.*

By this standard, we have had a few good SF movies lately. They have translated mental journeys into visual metaphors, and offhandedly shown the dangers of science while rolling in it like happy dogs in rotten earth. The classic *2001* ended with a message of renewal and, specifically, rebirth, but we should remember that its dazzling visual effects represented the trauma of that rebirth. We should also remember the struggle between Dave Bowman (played by Keir Dullea) and the giant computer HAL (one letter in advance of IBM), a reminder that humanity must always remain in control of its destiny.

Close Encounters of the Third Kind, its title taken from the writings of the astronomer Hayek, was another hard-science epic, a convincing scenario for contact with interstellar Aliens. Flying to San Francisco several months ago, I looked down from 40,000 feet and saw Devil's Tower rising in splendid isolation. The top of the tower was a bright, slanted ellipse in the morning sunlight, while an immense shadow leaned behind it across miles of brush and prairie-dog holes. It seemed a likely landmark from outer space. Although the Aliens were friendly enough to reprogram NASA's computer into a giant church organ, there were enough veiled threats in the proceedings to satisfy a recalcitrant viewer: The Aliens had snatched planes from the sky and babies from their mothers, while the army had staged a plague of anthrax to keep the public at bay. The promise was tempered with its sacrifices: Richard Dreyfuss spent most of the film possessed, berserk, and destructive of suburban property values, finally abandoning his frightened family to meet the Aliens on a windswept mountain.

This leaves Gene Roddenberry's *Star Trek*. The film was disappointing because it was merely an expanded episode of the old television series, but a better series is hard to imagine. Roddenberry's faith in science is so great that his film ended with the happy mating of man and machine. His great creation, Spock, however, tells a different story. Spock embodies the rational, scientific attitude, and refuses to recognize the human half of his heritage. Repressing his origins, Spock inevitably breaks out into occasional storms of rage, depression, and love.

Beyond these achievements of hard-science SF lie the limitless possibilities of art, the human drama beneath a burning star. Already our screens are exploring the bleak, comic metaphysics of Vonnegut, the sublime antitheses of LeGuin. May they succeed.

Charles Nicol is a professor of English at Indiana State University and a former editor of Science Fiction Studies.

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Produced by NORA KAYE and STANLEY O'TOOLE Directed by HERBERT ROSS

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Legacy of the Sun King

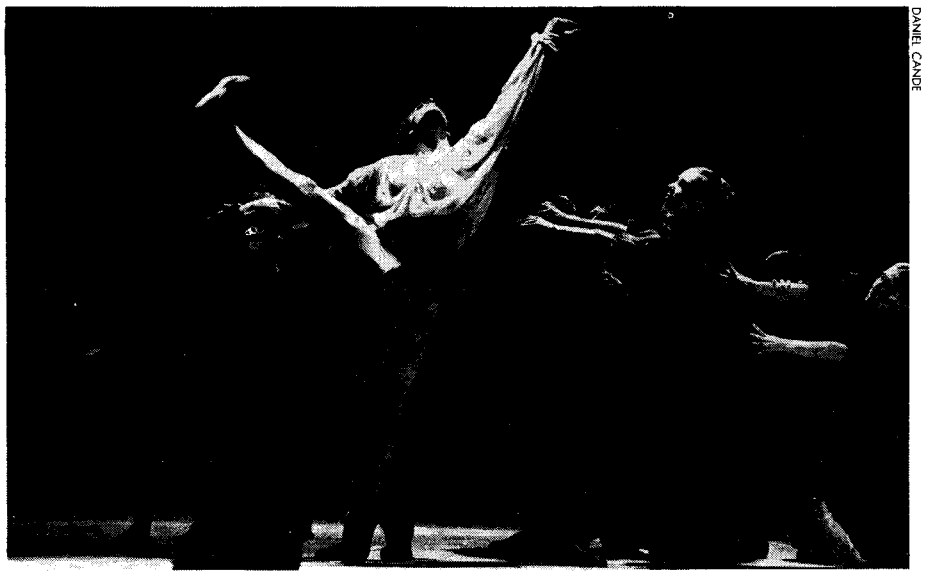
ON A RECENT visit to Paris I saw the highlights in the repertory of a company that was established three centuries ago by the *premier danseur étoile* of the realm, Louis XIV (yes, the king was an accomplished dancer). Under the direction of Violette Verdy, until recently an internationally famous ballerina with our own New York City Ballet, the Paris Opéra Ballet finds itself in a state befitting artistic descendants of the Sun King. (Verdy shares responsibility for the vivacity, discipline, and technical brilliance of the company with Claude Bessy, who has revamped, revitalized, and restored this ancient dance academy.)

The great French classic, *Sylvia*, first given at the Opéra in 1876, a year after the opening of the magnificent Palais Garnier, as the Parisians call their opera house, was given a sumptuous, new production. A new ballet, *Manfred* (performed at the Palais Des Sports), was created especially for the company by today's most celebrated dancer, Rudolf Nureyev.

The Paris Opéra Ballet's *Sylvia* has a lovely score by the French composer Léo Delibes and a restaging by the former ballerina Lycette Darsonval of Louis Mérante's original choreography. *Sylvia* is so gorgeous scenically that one's breath is fairly taken away at the rise of the curtain. Indeed, the sets reminded me of the brilliantly colored illustrations in books, such as *La Danza in Italia*, on the lavishly decorated settings for the opera ballet spectacles of the late 18th and 19th centuries. *Sylvia*, with its cast of shepherds, a Greek god and goddess, pirates, chaste maidens, and fauna, is so old-fashioned that it seems new. The ballerina Claude de Vulpian, who danced the title role at the performance I attended, dazzled the audience with pirouettes executed to both right and left (a rare bravura display), and with a sustained balance on a single pointe that flaunted gravity. Her acting too—of the tough, free female, the coquettish captive, and the radiant heroine in love—was superb. Michael Denard was her ardent, athletic suitor.

DANIEL CANDE

De Vulpian and Denard in a lavish Sylvia.



DANIEL CANDE

Guizerix as the tormented artist, Manfred.

Olivier Patty, dancing the statue of the god Eros come to life, brought delicious humor as well as Olympian prowess to his assignment. His multicolored wings seemed to lift him into space, to make him appear and disappear as if by magic, and, of course, to fan the flames of true love.

Manfred is quite another matter, for it starkly explores both the ecstasies and the torments of the artist, the man, the beleaguered mortal. Nureyev has woven drama and poetry into his newest work (to music of Tchaikovsky), and juxtaposed fantasy and reality as they are in the lives of most creative beings. Seeing it in Paris, I knew that I could not at once absorb every detail of this immense and complex psychological portrait in movement, but I let it sweep over me and into my consciousness.

Jean Guizerix, who danced the title role, gave a stupendous performance. The physicality of the role calls for almost unbelievable stamina in the ballet's air-smashing leaps, desperate racings, plummeting falls. But even more demanding was the emotional pitch of the ballet, which required of Guizerix an unrelenting intensity. As the tragic hero, a combination of the Manfred of the poem written by Lord Byron and of Byron himself, he frantically courted Astarte, the goddess of love and inspiration; overindulged with revelers; sought solace from his sister; engaged in violent battle with real and imagined enemies.

The choreographer's use of mass groupings is remarkably fresh. The tableaux are wholly original, creating portraits of passion, prayer, and violence to pinpoint the key moments in a self-destructing life. Nureyev's choreographic paths for reaching these arresting pictures flow with utter freedom.

Manfred, a ballet theme that has been brewing within Nureyev for some time, has more complexities and more crowded movement sequences than one might wish to deal with, but these become insignificant when one opens eyes and mind and memory. Some French critics didn't much like either *Manfred* or *Sylvia*—Paris is going through a modern-dance stage, a period which we experienced in the 1930s for the first time and which the French rejected until recently. But one young Paris dance writer, Michel Odin of *Figaro Magazine*, whispered to me, as a performance of *Manfred* came to an end, "Do you think Nureyev is the Shakespeare of the dance?" Why not? Shakespeare, too, could confuse as well as illuminate deeper truths.

—Walter Terry

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Edward Albee: All Over?

Irene Worth, Tony Musante, Frances Conroy—Trying to give weight to half-characters.

FATE HAS NOT been kind to Edward Albee. I don't mean only the bitterness of early success and subsequent decline, though that's hard enough. Worse: He was born into a culture that—so he seems to think—will not let him change professions, that insists on his continuing to write plays long after he has dried up.

It's a notable fact (I've noted it previously myself) that some of the glowing names in the history of English drama wrote imperishable plays when they were young and then went on into other lives. Congreve, Wycherley, Vanbrugh, Sheridan, Barker, all spent most of their later years in other occupations. Apparently each of them felt he had written all he could or wanted to in play form, and changed. But today, pinned to public account by the intensities of hype, the dramatist evidently feels that to change professions, even if he might be good at another job, would be to admit defeat. Though exhausted—like Albee and Miller and Williams—he trudges on, to our embarrassment if not to his.

Look at Albee's career since its peak, which I take to be *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, produced 18 years ago. Three adaptations, *The Ballad of the Sad Cafe*, *Malcolm*, and *Everything in the Garden*, all deplorable. (The very fact that he began making adaptations right after the success of *Virginia Woolf* was a sign of nerve tremor.) Then *Tiny Alice*, *A Delicate Balance*, *All Over*, and *Seascape*, a long torpid decline interrupted only briefly by a pair of short, passable attempts at the Absurd, *Box* and *Quotations From Chairman Mao Tse-Tung*. What marked the full-length plays, right after the realism of *Virginia Woolf*, was Albee's use of mysticism and death. I mean use, utilization, not inquiry or dramatization. The big words and ideas became weapons to club us into awe of the works' profundity, a conclusion that was inescapable because the works themselves were so tenuous, even silly. Allegory (*All Over*) and symbolism (*Seascape*) were also called into service, creakingly. Overall, Albee seemed compelled to write plays just to prove that he is still a playwright, and he grabbed at sonorous subjects and august methods to cloak his insufficiencies.

The bottom, so far, is reached in his latest play, *The Lady From Dubuque*. There *is* a lady from Dubuque in it, or she says she is, only so that the title could refer to Harold Ross's remark that the *New Yorker* wasn't edited for the little old lady from Dubuque. Which has nothing to do with the play. Which, in pertinency, lines up the new title with *Virginia Woolf*. Even more strained is Albee's attempt once again to place himself at the center of mysteries, though again he ends up in the center of gas.

Lady begins realistically with party games (once again!) in a living room, with Albee's latter-day salty language that offends because it's so self-consciously salted on. The realism is mechanically lightened with an ancient dramaturgic device: The actors know they are in a play, and they address the audience from time to time. Since no reason, narrative or textural, is ever adduced for the device, we soon realize that it's Albee who is addressing us, not the actors, assuring us that he is a clever-deep master of the stage.

The scene is the metropolitan home of a young couple, and we quickly learn that the wife is dying, presumably of cancer. She feels licensed to be candidly harsh about her friends, so we get disclosures of rivalries and dislikes under the initial chumminess. None of it is enlightening or amusing or moving because the patterns of discovery are trite and the characters are stock—those that are well-enough developed to be stock. As the tired first act is obviously coming to a close, it dawns on us that we haven't yet seen Irene Worth, the star. The guests leave, the hosts go upstairs, and Worth enters through the front door, accompanied by a suave black man. She puts a finger to her lips to enjoin the audience to be quiet about her presence. Then she speaks a portentously veiled line or two, and the curtain falls.

Our hopes for the second of the two acts are, therefore, low. They rapidly sink further. After the relative realism of the first act, the play suddenly goes symbolic. Worth and her black friend turn out to be Mysterious Beings. We never learn much more about him than his first name and the fact that he has a black belt in karate. Worth says that she's the young wife's mother, but her "son-in-law" doesn't recognize her when he comes downstairs the next morning, and the playwright keeps the "daughter" so agonized that when she joins them she never even really looks at Worth, who embraces her. Much superiority is given to Worth and her friend (they constantly exchange knowing looks and chuckles at the puzzlement of the others) and much hollow gnomic dialogue. Someone says to Worth: "Who are you—really?" She replies: "Who are *you—really*?"

All through the second act, reminders of the numinous guardians in Eliot's *Cocktail Party*, and of Hellman's *Toys in the Attic*, in which Worth played a character with a black lover, are mixed with windy wisdom. "The thing we must do about loss is hold on to the object we're losing." Patently, we're meant to think of divine messengers, but there's no intrinsic reason why we should. The suffering wife is comforted by the two visitors but in no way that others could not have done. She dies, and they go.

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And we're left with the conviction that still another Albee play was written chiefly because Albee felt he had to demonstrate that he's still a playwright, that again he chose immense subjects as armor to cover his dramatic skinniness. Inarguably death is haunting Albee's mind. One way or another, death has figured in all his long plays since *Virginia Woolf*—but to no artistic end. It may be critically overwhelming but it's thematically apt to raise the name of this age's prime dramatist of mortality, Samuel Beckett. Unlike Beckett, Albee can't face death without a lot of spiritualist's hokum, let alone add to our apprehension—any kind of apprehension—of the idea.

The cast and the director, Alan Schneider, can scarcely be criticized because they virtually had to fabricate everything. They had neither whole characters to deal with nor tenable symbols nor real currents of dramatic motion. This is most painful with Irene Worth, an actress I call great with whatever truth is left in that worn adjective. To see her try to give weight to this trumpery role is rather like what it would be to hear Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau sing "White Christmas." For Worth's entrance and exit Pauline Trigère, who gets large billing, designed a tailored scarlet coat, a long black stole, and a wide black hat. That costume provides the only drama of the evening.

Albee is now 52. What will become of this intelligent, valuable man? He has a third of his life left—more than that, I hope—plenty of time for another career if misconstrued pride doesn't deter him. I've long thought that he would make a first-class dramaturg—not "resident dramatist" as he's supposed to be for the reorganized Vivian Beaumont Theater in New York but dramaturg in the European tradition that is beginning to prosper at American institutional theaters—an in-house critic (Albee's writing and interviews show sharp critical acumen about everyone but himself), a literary manager and production adviser, and occasionally a director (he directed his own *Seascape* and has done more directing since then). Some of Albee's recent comments show a movement toward dramaturgy. I hope it grows.

It's not a matter of renunciation. Why should he flatly renounce playwriting? But the evidence of the last 18 years doesn't justify Albee's investment of all his remaining life in his own plays. What a courageous act it would be for him to opt for dramaturgy. How helpful to a theater, to other writers he can advise, to the changing of a cultural pressure that is wasteful, to the fullest use of his own gifts. Will he insist instead on serving out the term to which, presumably, he has let our culture sentence him?

—Stanley Kauffmann

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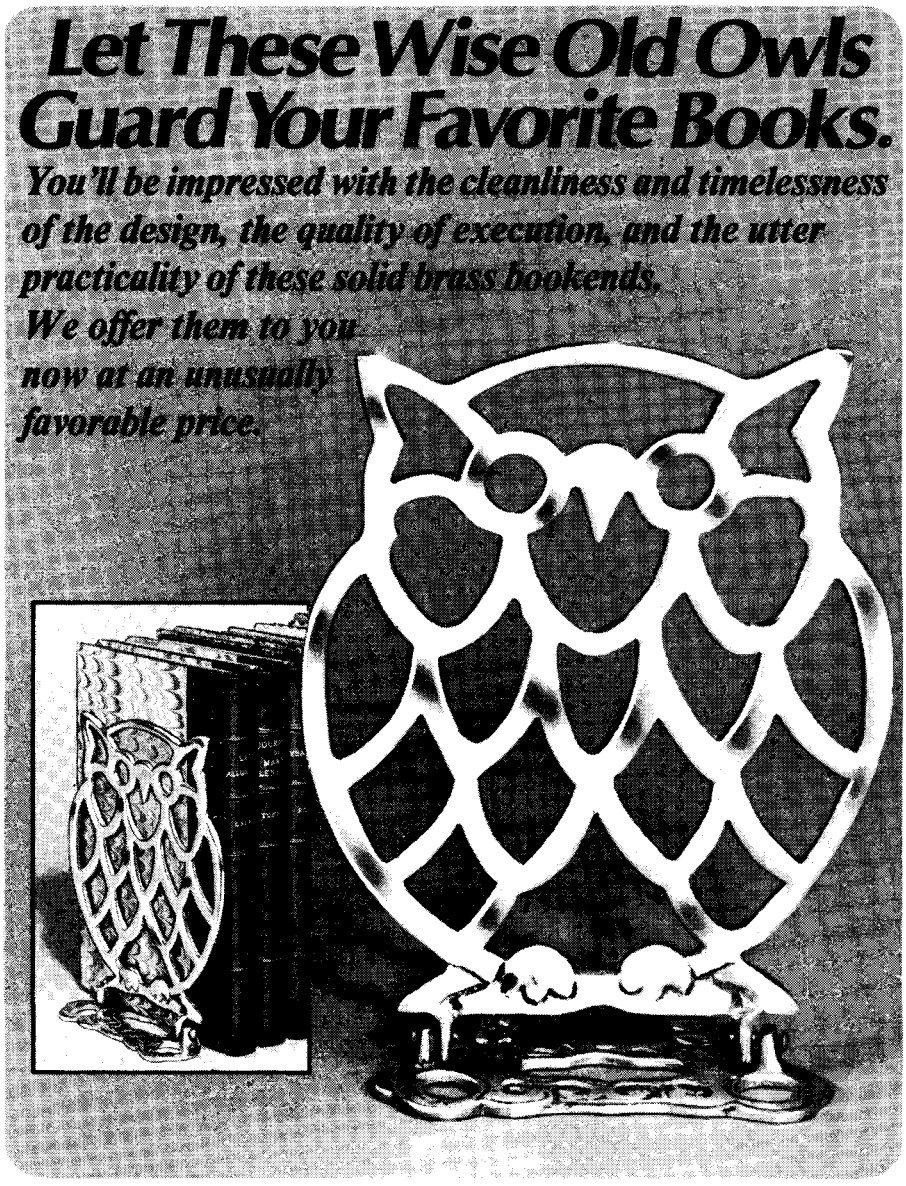

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Of Willie's Bondage

by Leon Edel

Maugham
by Ted Morgan
Simon & Schuster, 711 pp., $17.95

SOMERSET MAUGHAM could never understand why he wasn't taken more seriously by literary critics and scholars, as distinct from the public that made him the richest writer in the world. Certain of his early and late contemporaries—Conrad, Meredith, James, D.H. Lawrence, Joyce, even Arnold Bennett—were treated almost as the authors of classics during their lifetime; but Maugham always found himself in the embarrassing limbo of lucrative and empty success. Fame came early and abundantly: We have only to look at Gerald Kelly's portrait of the top-hatted Maugham during the period when he had four plays running at once in London. And then the entire world acclaimed *Of Human Bondage* and clamored for his tales. He had more attention and more publicity than any writer could stomach, and yet he never found the recognition he desired. Hugh Walpole was made a "Sir," but the best Maugham, who had made all Britain aware of the lonely and strange life of Britain's colonial outposts in jungle countries, could get was an OBE. "I seek distinction rather than lucre," he used to say as the money poured in; in reality he sought both. Joyce or D.H. Lawrence would have settled for the lucre. The distinction could take care of itself.

I remember glimpsing Maugham during the 1930s when he was living in New York, at the Ritz on Madison Avenue and 46th. I worked just across the street and on occasion, in the middle of the day, would observe him sauntering down the avenue, small, neat, impeccably dressed, wearing a soft hat he sometimes had to hang on to while his other hand controlled the straining leashes of his dachshunds. One day, going into the Ritz, we entered the elevator at the same time. I noticed how deep the lines of his face were, and the downturned emphatic and unhappy mouth. He seemed armored against the world, both in his dress and his distanced reticence. Fifteen years or so later fate gave me another glimpse of him. I had read that Maugham was revisiting all the places that had meant most to him during his lifetime. In Venice, one day, he came aboard a *vaporetto* on which I was riding along the canal. He had a much younger man with him, apparently his secretary, Alan Searle. He was now distinctly the "old party" he called himself; and his mouth was turned down as if two deep curved lines had been drawn with a thick pencil. Yet his eyes were smiling as he sat down: They looked everywhere—at the blue Venetian sky, the pinnacles of churches, the dead palazzos, and the congested water-life of the canal. With the loose skin of his seamed and crusted neck overflowing his necktie and collar, he was a sprawling turtle with an eager, hungry look. He seemed to be taking in as much of the world as possible, knowing he would soon have to leave it.

He wrote of surfaces; to go below was to name terrors he could not face.

I felt then, as I do now, that the explanation of his dilemma, of having success beyond all dreams without the recognition of his peers, lay in his being more an entertainer than a serious writer. His stories were in all the magazines, his books in all the bookshops—while he lived. When he died, it seemed as if he had left the stage. There were others who could take his place, while no one could replace Conrad, or James, or Lawrence. Maugham had neither the singular voice nor the style that makes a writer classic. Those searching eyes could see all the concrete things, but not the deeper emotions; he could describe man's human bondage but not the bondage of the hidden psyche.

For a long time this made him a dull subject for literary criticism—there seemed so little to say about him except that he was competent, professional, and really "slick." In retrospect, however, as we learn more about him, we can see that he will remain an admirable subject for biography. There is first the anomaly of his "success." Then there is his long-concealed psychosexual life—a double life as a homosexual who also could overcome his misogyny sufficiently to bed with a woman, though for the most part in a cynical way, with little affection and no love. He managed to marry and even to have a daughter, but it was a marriage with an absent husband, who lived his own life, usually with male "secretaries."

Maugham was born in Paris in the 1870s. His father was an English lawyer who worked in the French office of his firm. His mother, though frail and tubercular, bore several sons. While "Willie" Somerset was her favorite, and she smothered him with love, she did not live long. Maugham lost her when he was eight; two years later he lost his father. Her death, to the young boy, seemed a betrayal. "Few misfortunes can befall a boy," Maugham would write, "which bring worse consequences than to have an affectionate mother." He had lived in a fool's paradise, and to discover all the fantasies of his frustration, rage, deception, despair, and guilt we must look closely at how these are handled in his tales. We have only to remind ourselves of the protagonist in *Of Human Bondage* and his enslavement to the seductive yet rejecting waitress. Maugham's principal secretary, Gerald Haxton, treated him in the same destructive way, and when Maugham wept publicly at Haxton's funeral we may be sure he was also weeping for that long-lost mother who had unknowingly created his lost paradise. We may judge the extent of the trauma of his orphaned state by the fact that he began to stammer after his mother died and remained a stammerer to the end. When we know these vivid details of Maugham's particular "bondage" we recognize the acuteness of V.S. Pritchett's judgment that Somerset Maugham was "a man wounded and aloof who has sought consolation in excelling in his profession."

He excelled. He mastered the "well-made story" and he mastered the well-made play. His prose had clarity without much color; he wrote of the surface of things—to go below was to look into ter-

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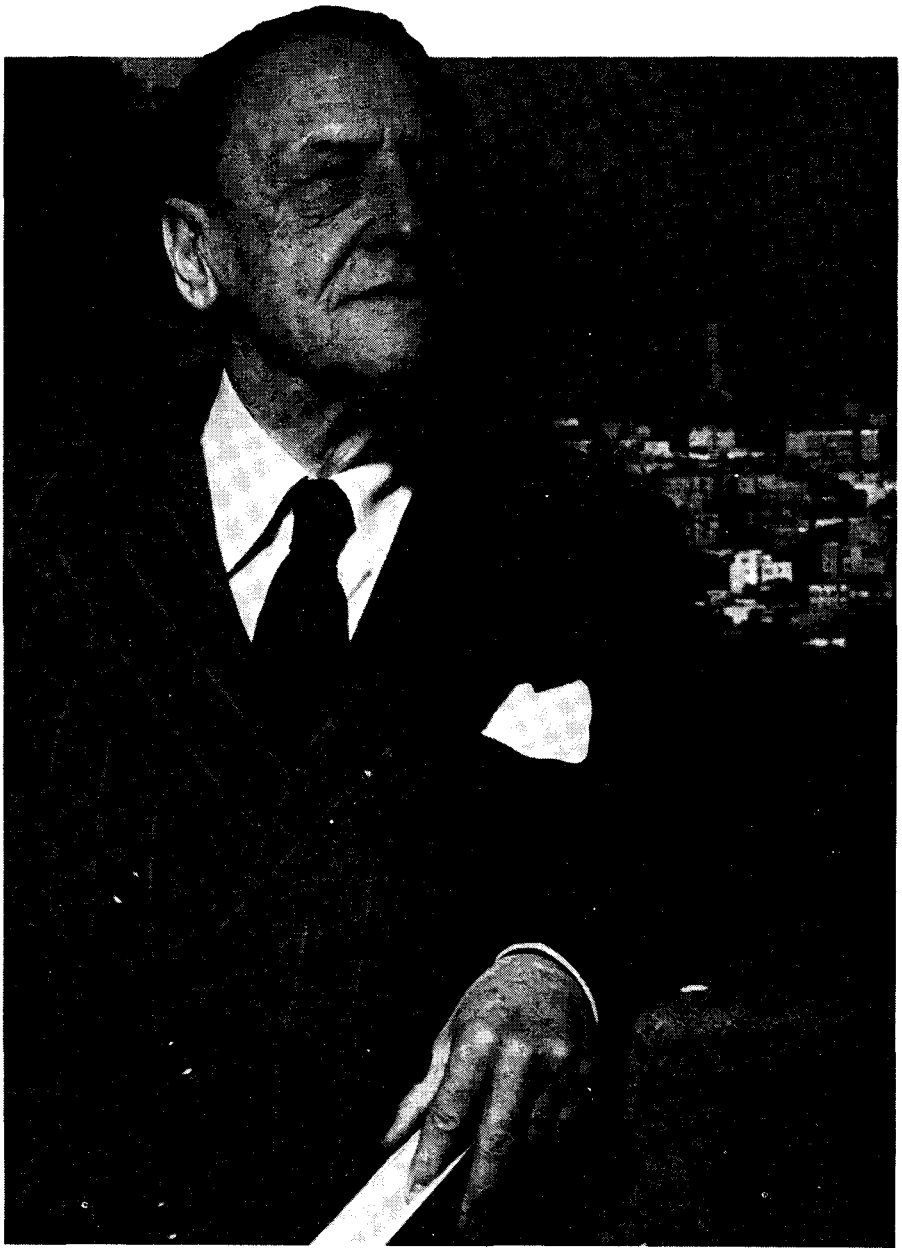

FRED LYON/PHOTORESEARCHERS

Maugham—Armored against the world, both in his dress and in his distanced reticence.

rors he could not name. Maugham's literary economies were ruled by expediency and his need to defend himself. If his stories lacked rhythm, they sold; for they were lucid and often, in their subject matter, touched profound subjects if not profound emotions ("Rain" was such a tale). He drew his readers to him by his cynicism, his coldness, his refusal to commit himself to feeling. This made him easy to take; and then he had dramatic flair and a grasp of irony.

One finds only the barest kind of attempt to understand Maugham's psychology in this newest biography which, it might be said, is in reality no biography at all. Ted Morgan hasn't tried to find out what a biography should be. All he has done has been to gain access to vast numbers of letters—those letters Maugham asked his friends to destroy—and to give us a running account of them. Nothing could be more mechanical and boring. Maugham's celebrity-life of endless meetings with "personalities" gives this book the effect of a continuous Merv Griffin talk show.

> In October Maugham became a grandfather....On October 11 Bruce Lockhart gave a luncheon for him to which he invited Moura Budberg and Harold Nicolson....He was still in London in November ....In December Maugham gave a farewell party for himself....

This is the kind of chatter out of which Morgan has cemented together his book. It goes on for pages and pages, years and years, for half a century, without synthesis, little summary, and no scheme—a date-book life! Moreover, Morgan hasn't done his homework. Biographies are not written out of letters alone: A background is needed, and an understanding of the cultural sea in which the subject of the biography is immersed. Morgan's idea of the historical background is to reel off headlines about Victoria's death, the Boer War:

> The Thames reached a record high of four feet three and a half inches above Trinity high-water mark. Bishops quarrelled with urbanists over plans to restore St. Paul's Cathedral. Fifty-one men and boys lost their lives ....

This kind of life goes on around any writer in any period. What such documentation suggests is that Morgan has no idea of what is relevant in the study of little Willie Maugham as he struggled to find himself while he attended a boys' school, clinging close to his memories of the Champs-Elysées, the early days of the Third Republic, and his lost childhood. Feeling dimly that he must treat some of the psychological problems, Morgan has consulted his predecessors—Karl G. Pfeiffer's *William Somerset Maugham,* the admirable French psychological study by Joseph Dobrinsky, *La Jeunesse de Somerset Maugham,* the recent revelatory volume by Robin Maugham, *Conversations With Willie*—but he delivers such meaningless sentences as "creative work can be seen as the transfer of the pre-Oedipal wish to bear children, as the mother does." He confuses the idea of British insularity (as in domestic novels by Jane Austen and Trollope) and arrives at the generalization, "It was also the time when English literature was breaking out of the insularity that had shaped it since Chaucer"—apparently unaware of Chaucer's French and Italian connections and overlooking Shakespeare or Byron or the influence of *Pamela.* When Morgan describes Maugham's decision to go to the South Seas he has the writer following the footsteps of "Loti, Robert Louis Stevenson and Zane Grey." Loti and Stevenson, yes, and he might have added Jack London or Herman Melville, but where in Pago Pago or Papeete would Maugham have found the riders of the purple sage?

This vacuum-cleaner biography results in too many pages on the senility of Maugham—during his last few years he suffered from destructive forms that estranged him from his friends and his daughter. There is something tragic and King Lear-like in his aging: From Maugham's 88th year to his death at 91 Maugham was paranoid and violent and, in the nature of senility, unpredictable. Readers may have a certain morbid interest in these pages; Morgan, however, once again fails to do his homework and treats Maugham not as a tragic case of mental decline but simply as if he were being freakish, capricious, and ruthless. Suddenly Maugham becomes the villain of the story.

Absent from this biography, in spite of its abundant research into rich materials, is the shaping hand and the intelligence that guides selection, arrangement, and the art of story-telling, by which inert archives become the stuff of life. Grim and joyless as much of

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Maugham's life was, he and his still wide public deserved better of Morgan, in spite of his commendable enthusiasm for the job.

Leon Edel, biographer of Henry James and author of the recent group biography Bloomsbury, A House of Lions, *has just finished editing the second volume of Edmund Wilson's papers.*

When the Fog Never Lifts

Morgan's Passing
by Anne Tyler
Knopf, 320 pp., $9.95

Reviewed by Eva Hoffman

MORGAN'S PASSING, Anne Tyler's eighth novel, opens on a scene of low-keyed, inchoate strangeness. A puppet show staged at a Baltimore Easter fair is suddenly interrupted when a fragile-looking young man emerges from behind the flimsy curtain and urgently calls for help; his wife, who is the other puppeteer, is having intense labor pains. The summons is answered by a "Dr. Morgan," a burly, heavily bearded man who offers to drive them to a hospital. He does so without any sense of urgency, although he intently asks questions about the materials from which the puppets are made, and about Emily and Leon Meredith's life, which he hopefully imagines to be "footloose." When Emily goes into labor, Dr. Morgan, in a hazy, casual way, delivers the child in the back of his junky and junk-filled car.

Almost everything about this episode is out of kilter: the unplaceable setting, whose seemingly irrelevant details jump out at us without context or explanation; the troubling irresponsibility of Leon and Emily, who apparently have made no preparations for the birth of their child; and most of all, the behavior of Dr. Morgan, whose unworried vagueness is utterly inappropriate to the event in which he is involved. Such baffling dissonances and misplaced reactions pervade and inform the entire novel, and at first they arouse the reader's curiosity (what's going on here?). But about halfway through, as these absurdist perplexities are neither clarified nor deepened, the curiosity turns into exasperation (what's going on here, anyway?).

On one level, the story is of a disturbed man, a man "who had gone to pieces," or who had "arrived unassembled." Gower Morgan, the novel's protagonist, is not a doctor at all, but someone who, for lack of an identity of his own, impersonates a ragtag assortment of selves. The actual circumstances of his life are ordinary with a vengeance. He lives in a Colonial brick house acquired with his wife's money and manages a hardware store by the grace of his wife's family; he has seven daughters, and he and his family share the house with his nearly senile mother and his doltish, dreamily sleepy sister. Morgan exists amid this abundance of concreteness in a state of permanent disconnection, and he views those near and dear to him through a kind of aphasic, derealizing blur. He catches on to the fact that one of his daughters is getting married, for example, only when her wedding reception is discussed; and he sometimes thinks that his wife once forgot to tell him about the imminent birth of a daughter—but he isn't sure.

To escape this messy amorphousness, and the dissolving formlessness of his own self, Morgan, each morning, steps into a different costume chosen from his extensive thrift-shop collection, and into a different role. At various times, he has posed as a glassblower, an orthodox rabbi, "a tugboat captain for the Curtis Bay Towing Company, and a Mohawk Indian high-rise worker." His encounter with Emily and Leon is the beginning of his most compelling fantasy, and the plot of the novel revolves around his secret pursuit of the young couple and his gradual insinuation into their lives. Emily and Leon are a stray and an unexceptional pair of waifs who have meandered into Baltimore and into their unlucrative occupation half-accidentally, but to Morgan the straitened and simple tenor of their life is a mark of the clarity and definition he so entirely lacks. And, when he finally stops spying on the Merediths from parking lots and enters into a triadic symbiosis with them, it turns out that he answers a need in them too; particularly to the cramped, anxious, literal-minded Emily, he seems an elf or a goblin, who introduces her to disarray, and who promises some wider, more exciting possibility.

The interplay of a drab, mediocre reality and of second-rate fantasies is an intriguing theme. It suggests what happens to the needs of the spirit when they have no outlet for expression; it hints at the comedy of an imagination without style, a madness without panache. The unlovely, prosaic texture of the protagonists' lives is best conveyed through masterfully detailed descriptions of urban landscapes and of commonplace objects. Morgan's house, for example—with its "particles of related people's unrelated worlds: his daughters' booksacks tumbling across the hall radiator, which also served as mail rack, sweater shelf, and message bureau; his wife's League of Women Voters leaflets rubber-banded into a tower on the living-room coffee table; and his mother's ancient, snuffling dog dreaming of rabbits and twitching her paws as she slept on the cold brick hearth"—is a triumph of tacky, commonplace dailiness.

But, like the disjointed tidbits of Morgan's house, or the fragmented elements of his character, the various pieces of the novel, although intriguing in themselves, simply refuse to jell, focus, or add up. Morgan's dissatisfaction is so without contours, his perceptions and flights of fancy so vapid and lacking in energy, that it is difficult to sympathize with his condition, or to understand why Emily, after an ardorless courtship, decides to leave Leon and marry Morgan. Because Morgan's peculiarity seems without purpose, it drives the reader to ask the most naive questions: What's wrong with him? What does he want? Why doesn't he do something? In fact, all the protagonists of *Morgan's Passing* are separated from their alienated, eccentric, or neurotic brethren who so thickly populate

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the pages of modern fiction by their lukewarm emotional temperature, the absence of delineation or intensity even in their pain. They are too lethargic, too passive, and the novel remains suspended in a chilly, murky, ozone-thin limbo—a bit as if Flannery O'Connor were writing in a fog. Without an exploration that would make the characters more familiar, and without a perspective that would make their estrangement significant, Anne Tyler is left with a story about weirdness—and weirdness, as a novelistic subject, is simply not enough.

Eva Hoffman is a senior editor at Politics Today. *She is working on a book of cultural commentary on the Sixties and Seventies.*

Our Fear and Trembling Through the Ages

Landscapes of Fear
by Yi-fu Tuan
Pantheon, 263 pp., $11.95

Reviewed by Thomas Szasz

"WHAT IS IT to be human? What is it like to live in the world?" are the questions Yi-fu Tuan, a professor of geography at the University of Minnesota, proposes to discuss in his book *Landscapes of Fear*. Although all religions, the behavioral sciences, and many thinkers have addressed these formidable questions, none of their answers has fully satisfied our curiosity about our existence.

Man is the animal that uses tools, speaks, lies, has culture and history, and systematically preys on members of its own species—these are said to be some of the characteristics of human beings. Professor Tuan proposes to look at human existence through the refractive lenses of another organizing principle—namely, that of fear and our efforts to cope with it. This is a good idea, though it is neither as original nor quite as fruitful as Tuan would like to believe.

Tuan traces the patterns of human fear from childhood to old age, from past ages and "primitive" cultures to the present and our own civilization. Since he does all this in 263 pages, it is hardly surprising that there are omissions in his account. Some of these are puzzling in view of the author's obviously wide-ranging scholarship.

For example, fear occupies a central position in psychoanalytic theory. Because Freud was more interested in what inhibits people than in what inspires them, his cosmology is based not

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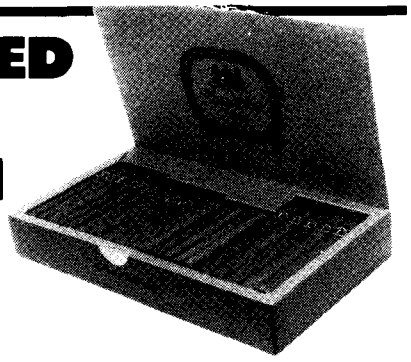

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on desire (as often believed), but on dread, which Freud called anxiety. In *Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety* he wrote: "Anxiety is a reaction to a situation of danger....It might be said that symptoms are created so as to prevent anxiety from emerging." Although the whole Freudian theory of neurosis is really an account of a particular style in the landscape architecture of human fears, and although Tuan mentions some psychoanalytic contributions, he does not refer to Freud's work at all.

It is disappointing, too, to come across, in an otherwise sound and sophisticated book, statements such as the following: "The healthier individuals are, the bigger and more complex is the stage on which they act with confidence. To schizophrenics and other sufferers from mental illness, on the other hand, life's supportive stage is narrow and fragile indeed." By this definition, the emotionally introverted, the temperamentally introspective—monastics, for example—would all be seriously mentally ill. Professor Tuan even repeats the cliché that "geniuses, venturing beyond the familiar circle ... risk pushing to the edge of madness." His neglect of the modern mania for tranquilizers is also surprising. Only in our age has fear become defined as a disease, and has chemical self-stupefaction by prescription been accepted as a cure for it.

But enough of what Tuan omits. What he includes is more than enough to make his book worth reading. His cataloguing of our fears is refreshing, and his comments about them are invariably intelligent and often sobering. Children, he notes, are now more afraid of their classmates than of their teachers. His brief review of the brutality, throughout much of history, with which parents have often treated their children reveals the shocking illiteracy of contemporary mental health experts who think that "child-battering" is a mental illness of modern parents only.

His discussion of ghosts and witches, though overly brief, is faultless, and so are his remarks on urban crime and harsh criminal punishment. Illustrative of Tuan's elegant insights is his observation that while formerly we feared the power of nature, now we fear its fragility: "If the educated people of the Western world can still be said to fear nature, it is the paradoxical fear that plants and animals, even rivers and lakes, may die through human abuse." Herein lies a pattern that is, indeed, profoundly characteristic of the human dilemma: Our fears become "problems" that we endeavor to solve, only to discover that in turn our "solutions" have become new problems. "Collective human power, once turned against nature, may be turned against the marginal and volatile elements of society, creating a landscape of punishment, or, more subtly, a vast system of bureaucratic control as powerful, arbitrary, and inaccessible as nature itself before it was subdued." Philosophers and psychoanalysts have known this for some time, but politicians and social planners refuse to face it—preferring instead to act as if we could find "perfect solutions" for our problems if only we persevered enough.

Tuan's greatest gift, at least as it appears in this book, is aesthetic, rather than intellectual, as one can tell from the title of his book alone. (Ironically, it has resulted in the book being catalogued under "Landscape—Psychological Aspects," as well as "Fear.") "Cosmos," Tuan reminds us, originally meant order and harmony, especially of the world. The term "cosmetics" comes from this root and referred originally to the art of arranging the hair. "We begin to create the world by decorating the body," says Tuan early in this book, and thence he traces the intimate connections between disharmonies of all sorts and the sense of fear that such "disorders" inevitably create in us.

The rich connections that this suggests among religion, politics, law, and psychiatry on the one hand and aesthetics on the other are, however, implied rather than worked out. Still, this does not impair *Landscapes of Fear* from being an exceptionally pleasing work.

One of the statements Franklin Roosevelt is best remembered for is "... the only thing we have to fear is fear itself." St. Theresa of Avila, Montaigne, and Francis Bacon voiced the same idea—which is appealing, but not true To be sure, every aphorism, as the Viennese satirist Karl Kraus noted, is either a half-truth or a truth-and-a-half. Actually, sometimes we are fearful when we shouldn't be, and sometimes we are not when we should be. Our skill, or the lack of it, in steering our course between these two reefs goes far in creating the conditions for the courage and cowardice we display, and the joys and sorrows we experience, throughout our lives.

Thomas Szasz, professor of psychiatry at the State University of New York in Syracuse, is a columnist for Inquiry *magazine. His latest book is* The Myth of Psychotherapy *(1978).*

"I really envy you, Michael. You're young, talented; you've got your whole lifestyle ahead of you."

Prescription for the Seventies

Fortune's Child
by Lewis H. Lapham
Doubleday, 359 pp., $14.95

Reviewed by
James Sloan Allen

THE DECADE OF the Seventies will likely live in memory as an era of self-love, or narcissism. But it should also be remembered for the social critics who impressed this diagnosis on our minds and fought narcissism as a disease. Lewis Lapham, editor of *Harper's* magazine, is one of these crit-

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ics, and, like several of his comrades-in-arms (Christopher Lasch, Gerald Graff, and Joseph Epstein), he has taken his parting shot at the decade with a collection of essays, mostly combative and written in the heat of battle.

Although Lapham belabors many of the same symptoms as his fellow critics—such as predatory psychological needs, the cult of ecology, and the fear of death—he alone isolates a single cause: the hegemony of money. Ever since World War II, he says, Americans have lived like spoiled "rich kids." The inheritors of Western civilization's economic and cultural capital, Americans have felt no need to contribute substantively to it and have instead indulged themselves in the revelries of aimless affluence, cultural frivolity, and selfish competition for pieces of the patrimony. In consequence, Americans of all types have lost respect for both past and future and have banished from their lives the energies of will and imagination that nourish culture. Worst of all, so steeped are they in the rich kids' "innocence" of life that they have grown blind to actuality, their minds bewitched by symbolism, their hearts beguiled by the illusion of disillusion and lazy idealism.

Lapham's portrait of America recalls Oscar Wilde's portrait of Dorian Gray: the moral monster behind the unblemished face. Cast in the rhetoric of old-time religion—the will of God, the beneficence of Grace, the evils of appetite and "court life"—it suggests a hell-fire sermon warning of damnation. The lordly tone, relieved only by the nice irony of a few narrative pieces, will offend anyone inclined to wonder how these righteous condemnations of wealth can issue so readily from a man possessed of what most Americans would label wealth, and Lapham declines to reveal how he preserved his chaste clarity of mind. Yet Lapham's very earnestness is among his greatest strengths. For it exemplifies the argument it presents: Let seriousness conquer foolishness, exertion vanquish sloth, the contemplation of complexity master the taste for simplification, the discipline of objectivity thwart the seductions of subjectivity.

These are bracing prescriptions, and although common to the conservative cultural critics of the Seventies (many of them political radicals, which Lapham most emphatically is not), they have nowhere found more compelling expression than here. One can only wish Lapham had looked more closely into causes. For he attributes too much in contemporary culture to wealth, giving nary a nod to formative changes in, say, family life and the economy at large, a lapse resulting in misleading contrasts between our day and previous, purportedly healthier times. He lets wealth it-

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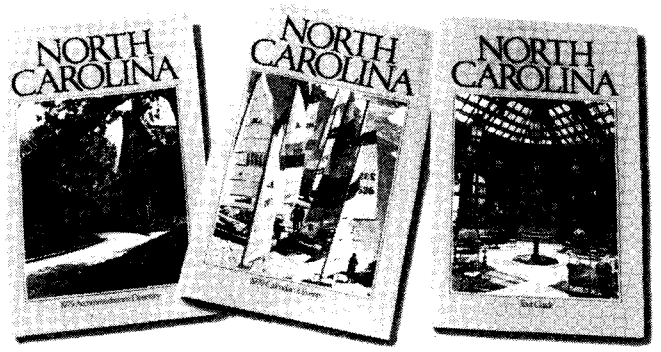

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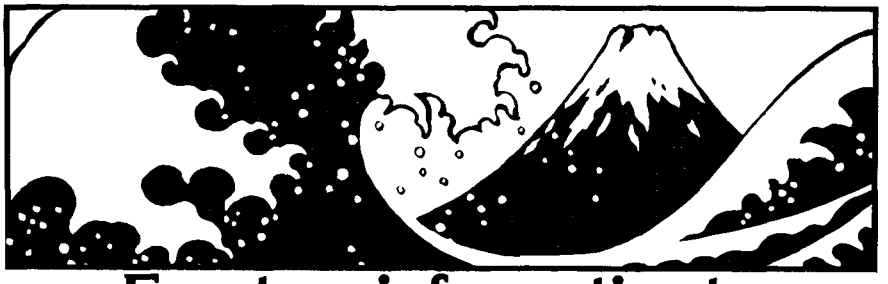

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self remain largely an abstraction, never defining it or explaining how one might escape its wiles or identifying who, besides the Rockefellers and the Kennedys, are numbered among the omnipresent wealthy "they" and who, besides Lapham himself, are not.

Perhaps Lapham will take up such themes in the Eighties. But now he is content to shower brimstones on a languishing culture while demonstrating that even in this culture the critical spirit thrives.

James Sloan Allen is a freelance writer and critic. He has just finished a book of cultural criticism at midcentury.

Books in Brief

At Highest Risk: Environmental Hazards to Young and Unborn Children
by Christopher Norwood
McGraw-Hill, 280 pp., $10.95

IN 1976 a team of biochemists in New Orleans identified more than a hundred potentially dangerous chemicals in the umbilical-cord blood of a group of newborns. It was a chilling discovery, since the womb has always been perceived as a kind of membranous storm cellar that thoroughly shields the unborn from pernicious substances. *At Highest Risk* offers us a collection of episodes like this, all disturbing, to amply document Christopher Norwood's theme: that some toxic materials can penetrate the placental sanctuary within some women, that this contamination can induce latent cancers that may not appear for 15 or 20 years, that in the early years after birth the immature body of a child continues to be assaulted by environmental toxins produced, for the most part, by industries that have arisen since the end of World War II.

At Highest Risk is laced with the parlance, so unavoidable these days, of agencies with dry and cumbersome names, of unpronounceable chemicals with uninformative abbreviations. Profiles of damaged victims, however, imbue the book with enough humanity to offset the necessary excursions into laboratories and bureaucracies. Norwood, too, is careful not to oversimplify a complicated issue. Identifying environmental hazards is a perplexing business. It is not simple to test for hazards—one test could involve a study of 23,000 newborns. Such research is not cheap; it costs $200,000 to animal-test each new synthetic for carcinogenicity, and 6,000 new chemicals are created *every week* in the United States alone. Still, the reader is left wanting to know more about the corporate decision-making process that leads to the premature release of many suspected poisons.

Norwood's discussion seems disjointed and casually speculative at times, but she has uncovered enough fresh information to evoke the mood of foreboding she is after and to make the book valuable—to readers who have or want to have children and to those of us who wonder what our parents may have unwittingly done to *us*. — MOSE RICHARDS

"I shall now attempt the Oxford University Press."

A Dry White Season
by André Brink
Morrow, 316 pp., $10.95

IF MARTIN MYNDHARDT, the despicable protagonist of André Brink's prizewinning *Rumours of Rain*, represented the Afrikaaner as perfect hypocrite, then Ben Du Toit, the high-minded hero of *A Dry White Season*, is the Afrikaaner as perfect *naif*. *Rumours of Rain* was particularly important for its portrayal in the round of a capitalist apologist for the rape of South Africa. In giving us Myndhardt's own sophisticated rationalizations for his piggish actions, Brink has made a real contribution to our understanding of the system Alan Paton called "not a second Nazi Germany [but] a good imitation."

His Ben Du Toit is a decent man—fiftyish, a father of three, a mild-mannered history teacher, and something of a social cipher until, at the height of the Soweto riots, the militant son of the school janitor vanishes. In short order, both father and son die under circumstances identical to those surrounding the "accidental" death of Steve Biko in a Johannesburg prison. The action of the novel follows Ben's quest for justice.

Unfortunately, in his zeal for truth, Ben, no less than Myndhardt, brings down everyone around him. The body count is so heartbreaking that the book inadvertently raises the very difficult question of what price one may reasonably pay for one's moral principles. At least Hamlet, under a similar injunction to avenge the crimes of state, temporized before spilling all that blood. Which is why *Hamlet* is more than a melodrama of dirty doings in old Denmark.

Ben, on the other hand, acts without thinking. "If I can't go on believing in what I'm doing I'll go mad," he tells his frigid social-climbing wife. She answers: "I don't think you're all there any more." And he isn't. Neither Ben nor his implacable Special Branch opponents are ever "there" enough, in a dramatic sense, to accommodate the purulent moral problem that southern Africa poses in realpolitikal life.

André Brink's attack in this new book on what we all recognize as one of the most heinous and obscene regimes in modern times is his strongest to date—the English publisher reports that it won't even attempt to export the book to South Africa—but the novel itself is pro-

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portionately weaker. *A Dry White Season* suffers from the intrinsic fault of much of contemporary social realism—the author's art, like his hero, died for his cause.

—CAROLE COOK

The Cruelest Night
by Christopher Dobson, Ronald Payne, and John Miller
Little, Brown, 223 pp., $9.95

ON THE NIGHT of January 30, 1945, the *Wilhelm Gustloff*, a German training ship crowded with civilian refugees and military personnel, was torpedoed by a Soviet submarine in the Baltic Sea. An estimated 7,000 passengers perished in the worst maritime disaster on record. *The Cruelest Night*, written by three British journalists, is a readable and mercifully concise narrative of the ship's destruction and the circumstances surrounding it.

The authors point to a symbolic German nemesis in the massive evacuation effort that led to the sinking. The frenzied exodus from Baltic ports in the face of increasingly murderous Soviet attacks offers an obvious parallel to England's earlier humiliation at Dunkirk. All of the vessel's passengers during its final voyage were fleeing marauding Russian soldiers, who as they drove westward inflicted a brutal revenge on the inhabitants of eastern Germany. A further irony may be seen in the *Wilhelm Gustloff*'s varying fortunes. Initially designed as a single-class pleasure ship for vacationing German workers, it was used by Nazi propagandists to trumpet the early successes of National Socialism. Converted to a U-boat training ship during the war, this former adjunct of the Strength Through Joy movement finally recapitulated Germany's fate under Hitler.

Despite its readability and brevity, *The Cruelest Night* loses momentum in its concluding chapters. The postwar careers of Alexander Marinesko, the Soviet submarine commander, and Erich Koch, Hitler's Gauleiter for East Prussia, are interesting in themselves but relate only tenuously to the book's purpose. The authors have succeeded, however, in skillfully re-creating a previously neglected facet of a war that ravaged soldier and civilian impartially.

—DENNIS WILLIAMS

O My America!
by Johanna Kaplan
Harper & Row, 286 pp., $10.95

AS JOHANNA KAPLAN'S incandescently wise and funny first novel opens, its protagonist, Ezra B. Slavin, writer, intellectual, iconoclastic social critic, and political activist, has just died, leaving behind a substantial public following, a young widow and infant son, several ex-wives, sundry full-grown legitimate and illegitimate children and grandchildren, including his daughter Merry, the book's narrator. A Paul Goodmanesque figure devoted to the notion that America as a land of revolutionary possibility has consistently sold itself short, Slavin was the kind of radical Jewish intellectual to indulge in an irascible utopianism, and cloak himself in such sentiments as: "I have had a life-long affair with the idea of America. And when people find that difficult to believe, I remind them of the flintier vision which is bound to result when love is unrequited."

The author, by focusing on the private life of this culture hero and on his friends, acquaintances, and hodgepodge family, creates a novel of manners electric with devastating and often hilarious satire. While there is a genuine pathos to Slavin's life, and though the emotional damage he often does to those close to him is bodied forth with poignancy, a spirit of pure comedy pervades the book. A genius at the telling nuances of personality and of speech, Johanna Kaplan brings us such classic contemporary types as Ffrenchy, Slavin's inimitable hippie of a daughter, who wishes he would consult her guru because it "could really *help* him. To get *free*. From his like, you know, *mind* attachment," and Sybil Roizman, an affluent, fashionably leftish Manhattan matron, who declares of some friends, "Well, they're not political at *all*.... They don't even go to concerts!" Moving at high satiric speed, *O My America!* remains resonantly faithful to the complexities of actual experience, and precisely captures the spirit of things as they are in our advanced liberal age.

—JANE LARKIN CRAIN

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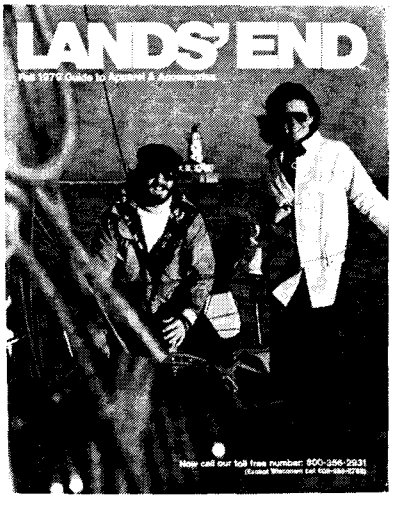

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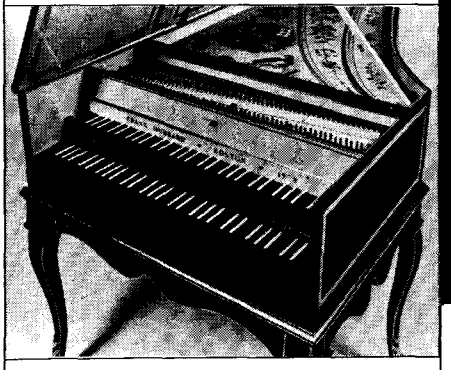

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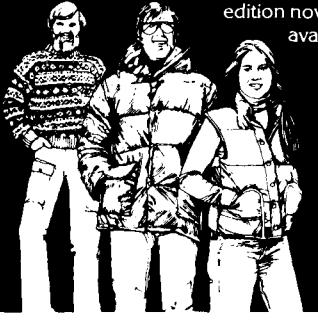

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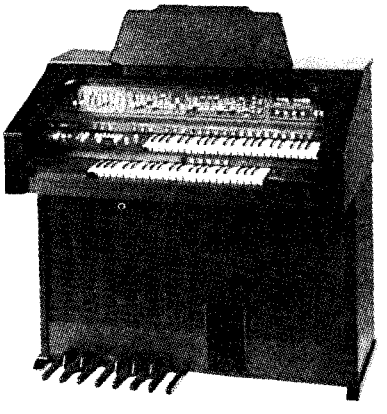

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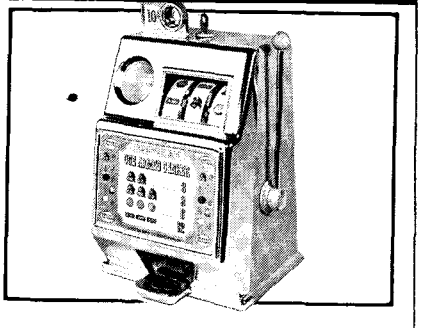

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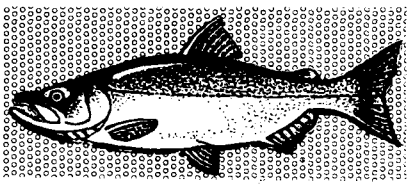

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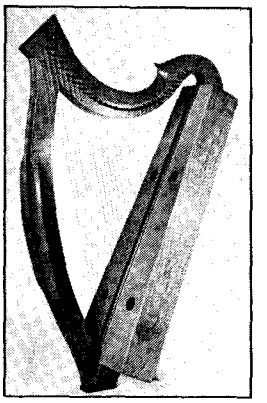

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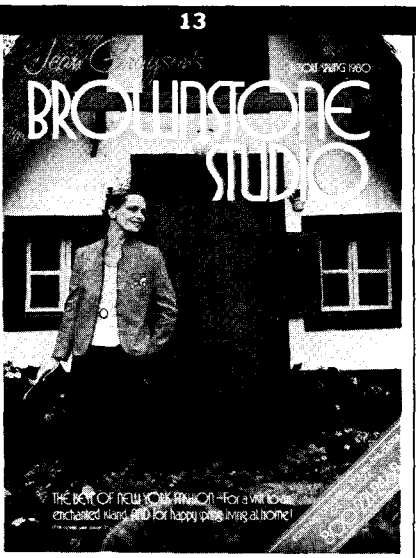

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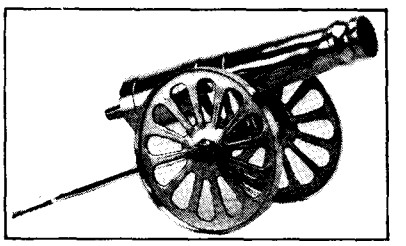

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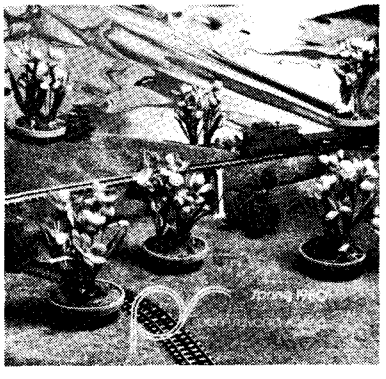

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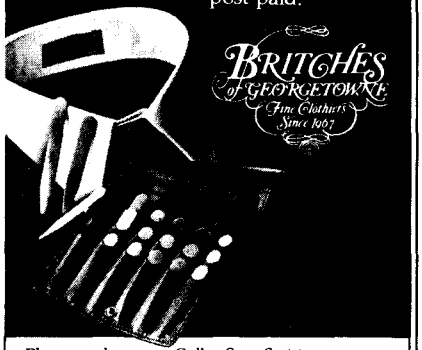

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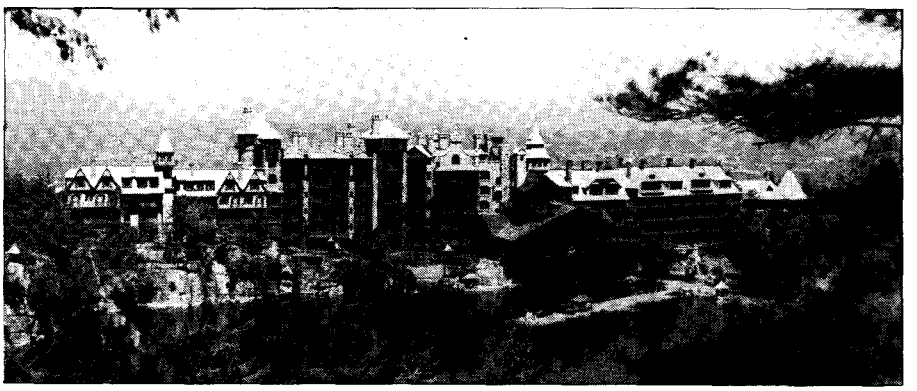
On a Shawangunk Alp



Mohonk Mountain House—"In March, all hands trying to find out whodunit."

IF ANYBODY around here has been yearning for yesterday, it survives in an eyrie called the Mohonk Mountain House, which hangs from a peak in the Shawangunk Mountains, about two hours from Broadway. A mass of turrets, towers, gables, and balconies, Mohonk Mountain House is three city blocks long—a pile with 305 rooms, 258 of them with balconies that look out on an ice-blue mountain lake. The blue and misty Catskills, higher than the Shawangunks, float on the horizon.

Mohonk might well have been built by King Ludwig, who had a penchant for such places. Or it might well have been described by Hans Christian Andersen or the Brothers Grimm. One writer has said that if Ludwig had built Mohonk, it would have been regarded as further indication that he was bonkers. Had the fairy-tale writers described it, however, it would have been pronounced as literary genius. Whichever, Mohonk is all but indescribable, for one must imagine this obsolete battleship of a hotel moored in the sky at the very edge of a 17-acre lake, a blue puddle 1,200 feet above sea level that laps at the very edge of the caravansary. On the late autumn afternoon I was there, canoes were drifting out of the mist, as mystical and as make-believe as a scene from Brigadoon.

The lake is stocked with big-mouth bass and with lake perch, enough of them to attract visitors who come to this mountain lodge just for fishing. In this season the ice forms to a depth of two feet, which not only brings out the skaters but draws cadets from West Point, who come each year for a winter endurance test. Drilling a hole in the frozen surface, they practice ice diving, an exercise with which every budding general must, it appears, be familiar.

Winter or summer, the sport on the lake can be admired from a 60-foot rocker-lined porch, an appurtenance, now disappearing, that was once as much a part of a self-respecting hotel as a sea of white napery in the dining salon and pads at table on which guests were to write down their orders.

Mohonk retains those features too. It takes 33 waitresses to attend to the guests who gather in the dining room, an enormous expanse of pine that was finished in 1893. Mohonk has no bar, as you might expect, and for a long time it didn't countenance wine and spirits on its premises. Now, it is possible to order drinks in the dining room. Hudson Valley wine is the big seller.

About the most rakish thing that has happened to the Mohonk dining room, the serving of drinks aside, is the setting up of a salad bar which, if you have been given a window seat, is a promenade so distant one might pack a light lunch to be eaten en route. From May to Labor Day, outdoors persons hike to the Garden Overlook for a breakfast cookout of pancakes, sausages, muffins, home fries, and steaming pots of coffee. Up-and-early-doers, who think half the day is wasted if you don't get up in the dark, can participate in the exercise called Rise and Shine with Ida, a brisk walk with Ida, the house masseuse, that takes off from the front door each morning at half past five. Those more in need of spiritual uplift than a turn in the dark, can appear for morning prayers. There is usually a member of the Smiley family, a descendant of Mohonk's founders, at the organ.

Smiley family members are also active leaders during the annual garden holidays that feature lectures and walks over the huge 2,500-acre estate. No hibernators, Mohonk's guests take off on cold-weather excursions called What's in the Winter Woods? Although it has no facilities for schuss-boomers who would race downhill, Mohonk has over 20 miles of cross-country trails, all maintained and marked.

In March Mohonk, which, after all, has the perfect setting for it, holds its annual mystery weekend. Mystery writers, mystery readers, and other sycophants of spookdom gather for talks, lectures, and an acted-out murder with all hands trying to find out whodunit.

A sugaring-off party greets the spring, and an Octoberfest heralds the fall. However, where some societies welcome the autumn by quaffing tankards of beer, Mohonkers prefer to listen to chamber music, inviting string quartets, wind quintets, and other roisterers.

Such ebbing niceties as afternoon tea are preserved at the resort. The hostesses trot out four-pound teapots to the lakeside lounge, and run through 22 gallons of the brew in an ordinary hell-for-leather afternoon.

The idea of a mountain house began with Quaker brothers, Albert and Alfred Smiley, who were born in Kennebec County, Maine, in 1828. They were 41-year-old schoolteachers, content with their lives, when Alfred set out for an excursion in the Shawangunks from his home in Poughkeepsie. He was captivated by the glory of the mountains, but he was undone by a farmer named John Stokes who had built a house with a barroom, a ballroom, and ten guest rooms at the northern end of the lake. Stokes sold his mountain domain for $28,000, and the Smileys gave up schoolteaching for innkeeping.

Boathouses were built on the lake, rooms and parlors were added to the main house, whole wings appeared, land was bought, and woodland pathways were cut through the chestnut forests.

Guests came up by train to Kingston or were fetched by stagecoach from New Paltz. As they arrived under the great stone porte cochere, Alfred would come down to meet them. Still, he ran a genteel house. There were no arrivals on Sundays. Neither was there card-playing, drinking, or dancing. But one summer a minister was finally prevailed upon to decide swimming was godly. Mohonk has been a swinging mountain house ever since.

—Horace Sutton

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SPORTING LIFE

Indoor Games—Thugs, Giants, and Women

As loyal readers are aware, this column has been in mothballs these past several months—the columnist off attending to other literary endeavors. While I hibernated in my study, however, the sporting life rolled onward. At least two new professional games—indoor soccer and women's basketball—have been added to the winter sports scene. I hadn't taken the opportunity to see either one, as the networks say, "close up and personal"; neither have you, judging by the anemic crowds the newcomers have been attracting. In the meantime, the two established cold-weather favorites, NHL hockey and NBA basketball, seem to be suffering rather big-league identity crises. Uncontrolled brawling is quickly reducing the fastest game on earth to a sideshow of brats with knives on their feet and clubs in their hands. Predictability—all scoring, no defense—is what's hurting the pro hoops at the box office.

With all that going on, it was time for me to slip into the nearest cabana and change into buckletop loafers, plaid slacks, open-collar shirt, and nylon windbreaker: Hey, ain't that Superfan? What follows, then, are some impressions left by four evenings with beer and binoculars in the color-coded seats.

Imagine first a game played with a Halloween-colored ball on a carpeted hockey rink complete with sideboards. This will give you a fair idea of the novel game presented by the Major Indoor Soccer League, which, as long as we're misplacing modifiers, might better be called the Soon to Be a Major Indoor Soccer League. The evening I spent watching the Hartford Hellions play the New York Arrows, only one fan showed up for each year of Anno Domini—1980, to be exact. The league was started by veteran franchise owners from Philadelphia and Washington who were eager to capitalize on the outdoor soccer boom. But they've given their indoor version some decidedly hockeyesque twists.

For example, there are six men to a side rather than regulation soccer's 11; substitutions are made freely, on the run. "Boarding"—analogous to checking in hockey—is illegal but encouraged; that is, physical contact is a recognized part of the show, and only sometimes penalized. Instead of refs taking down numbers and handing out yellow cards, as they do in regulation soccer (doesn't it always remind you of cops handing out speeding tickets?), offenders in indoor soccer are incarcerated in the penalty box for two- to five-minute stretches. This does nothing for the fellow's moral rehabilitation, you understand, but it does set up the one-man advantage for the opposition called (as in hockey) the power play. Scoring power-play goals in indoor soccer is much easier than in hockey, because the ball caroms off the boards so accurately and so swiftly. The clever team sends its top man to hang around the goal mouth and play rebounds for "garbage goals," Giorgio Chinaglia style.

Indeed, indoor soccer has been devised on the premise that American fans require a goal every few minutes to hold their attention. As one of the league touts explained, "We are trying to increase our audiences. The outdoor-soccer fans, we'll get anyway. What we're going after is the guy who finds European soccer boring." Frankly, I admit to moments of "soft focus" during the endless midfield maneuvering in soccer, but found the indoor game enthralling from start to finish. The teams play end-to-end patterns, there's a lot of fancy passing, and the goals come in quick succession. I only felt a twinge of sorrow for the goalies, who are likely to surrender more goals in an hour of indoor soccer than in an entire World Cup series. Shep Messing, the celebrated Made in America goalie who plays winters for the Arrows, allowed four goals in the second half alone. Somebody take his Skoal away! The final outcome was Hartford 9, New York 8, a 17-goal spree in 60 minutes. That total is far from unusual.

If it's any consolation to true-blue ice-hockey fans, some high marks of another order are being established in the NHL. Gordie Howe has survived into his 53rd year to play on a line for the Hartford Whalers with his son Mark, while Phil Esposito recently reached the 1,200-game plateau. Espo, the cool customer, may just go on forever. I overheard a fan say, "I loved him when he was good, and I still love him now that he's a Ranger." With every passing season, Esposito becomes more like *Godfather Part I Meets the Ice Capades*. Never deigning to indulge personally in physical confrontations, he cruises up and down the ice, the chewing gum going, the bouffant hair lightly ruffling, the all-knowing eyes saddened and wizened, as he cunningly sets up Don Murdoch for a slap shot. May he come to a soft landing, playing with his grandchildren in his tomato patch.

I doubt whether any of the new generation of hockey stars will endure like

"Let's face it . . . we are what we eat!"

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Howe or Espo, given the tripping, hooking, spearing, goring, and slashing that are subverting hockey. Indeed, it seems to me only a question of time until some hapless hockey player ends up on a mortuary slab, disemboweled by another's Northland number 5 right. The night the Philadelphia Flyers achieved their record 34-game unbeaten streak in a 5-3 win over the Rangers, only 3:46 minutes of the contest had elapsed before Ranger Ed "Boxcar" Hospodar mashed Flyer Ken Linseman to the ice. Linseman came up with his horribly broken nose gushing blood. Two minutes later, it was Flyer Tom Gorence stretched out with his neck sprained.

Flyer coach Pat Quinn dispatched his vigilante squad to retaliate—you know something is up when four defensemen take the ice—and midway through the second period Flyer captain Mel Bridgman put the spear to Hospodar's groin. Interestingly enough, the referees called no penalties during these incidents. Could it be that the National Hockey League endorses such tactics? Anyway, what happened next was as predictable as it was ugly: bedlam on the ice, mob violence in the stands. On their feet instantly, the fans chanted like Iranians in front of an American television crew, "Flyers suck! Flyers suck!" Then they actually attacked three Flyers, who—God knows why—happened to be sitting, fully accessible and wearing Flyers' jerseys, in the press section. The situation got so close to chaos that Madison Square Garden President "Sonny" Werblin considered calling off the game.

Several days earlier, members of the Boston Bruins had actually climbed into the crowd and beat up one of the spectators, and now, at the Garden, one clearly and unmistakably sensed fans eagerly anticipating a riot as part of the evening's entertainment. Jolly good fun, you know. Unless you've experienced one of these outbursts, you probably don't know what the Roman Coliseum was like in the time of Caligula or Nero. Still, an NHL arena is no place to bring a lady, and never, under any circumstances, an impressionable child. I came away hoping that this idiocy wouldn't spread to all NHL cities. I'll stay home and watch on the tube from now on.

If it's sedate you want, try instead the NBA, which might also stand for the National Boredom Association. The dominating centers of pro basketball—Artis Gilmore, Moses Malone, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar—have simply gotten too good; they make the game look dull. Scoring nearly at will, they lope from one end of the court to the other, the somnambulistic rhythm broken only by the occasional blocked shot, the fancy move, or the fast break. Team play is largely absent, defense is haphazard, and almost everybody wins at home. As a result TV ratings are off, and game attendance has stopped growing—except for the Celtics, reconstituted with Larry Bird, and the Lakers, enhanced by the magic of Earvin Johnson. At least NBA commissioner Larry O'Brien has rejected the NHL's brutal formula for drawing fans, and much to his credit too. Instead, the NBA is trying the three-point play for baskets shot from outside a roughly 23-foot semicircle.

Anyone who has actually seen a three-point basket, please contact the Audubon Society, rare bird division. In games I've seen, the new three-point opportunity is ignored by all but ancient mariners like Earl Monroe, who simply chucks up a shot from wherever he happens to be at the moment, to the deafening roar of his followers. The Pearl can do no wrong, but the rest of the NBA needs other approaches. Allowing the zone defense might be one. Raising the basket has been suggested any number of times. But the most likely answer to lackadaisical play is also the hardest to achieve—shortening the unnecessarily long NBA season.

Or perhaps we'll just have to wait for Faye and Kaye Young to show the guys how it's done. The Mss. Young, in case you didn't know, are the identical twin forwards of the New York Stars of the Women's Basketball League (WBL). They played college ball at North Carolina State, but as the team publicists quote them, with just the right touch of jock schlock, "We love New York and we want New York to love the Stars."

Anyone who sees the WBL in action can't help but fall in love. The women play fast, they play clean, they play hard. None of your boring dish-it-off-to-the-big-man stuff here. It's fast breaks, set plays, and the full court press—in short, team basketball the way you always dreamed it could be and the way the Knicks played it in the early Seventies. So far, however, except for the Midwest and Texas, where women's basketball is traditional, the franchises have been having a rough go. Poor attendance, low salaries, the hard life. Part of the problem, which can't be helped, is the cost of renting major arenas at peak hours. The part that *can* be helped is the refusal of the male-dominated sports press to take the women's game seriously. That might improve next season, when Carol Blazejowski and Nancy Lieberman, familiar Olympic names, are drafted into the league.

The toughest challenge facing the WBL, however, is to convert enough women into sports fans to support "their" league. Will the millions of women who participate in sports pay to watch them? Will feminists support their sisters? Will the game ever really appeal to readers of *The Female Eunuch*?

—Jonathan Evan Maslow

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In the Matter of Facts

DID YOU know that:

- "Mount Everest is a foot higher today than it was a century ago, and it may be growing at an accelerating rate?"
- "in 1755, Benjamin Franklin pursued a small tornado for three-fourths of a mile on horseback, repeatedly lashing out with his whip in an effort to dissipate the storm?"
- "the Egyptians trained baboons to wait on tables?"*

No?

Well then, did you know that in 1896 two men rowed across the Atlantic, or that Jimmy Carter is the first president to be born in a hospital, or that for distances of up to 150 feet an alligator can outrace a man?

Still no? How can you not? Millions of readers in recent years have purchased robust compendia of such tidbits. While countless literary classics languish out of print, enterprising souls have made money by printing yards of mental morsels on toilet paper. Information so popular must be worth knowing, right?—or at least worth knowing about.

Ever since *Ripley's Believe It or Not* first appeared (17 volumes are currently available), astonishing or curious "facts" have been a staple in the popular press. People enjoy being amazed by what they never suspected. They are pleased to possess information that others don't. Like gossip, such facts impart to folks the warm glow of being insiders, momentarily "in the know." Not incidentally, facts are useful to editors for filling space: They resemble news, and the supply is inexhaustible.

In the past decade, however, "facts" have blossomed into a fad. The sales of Guiness's *Book of World Records* rival those of the Bible. The popularity of *The People's Almanac*, *Fascinating Facts*, *More Fascinating Facts*, *Isaac Asimov's Book of Facts*, *Easy Answers to Hard Questions*, *Dictionary of Misinformation*, *Encyclopedia of Ignorance*, as well as of television shows such as *Real People*, testifies to the public's growing appetite for mental snacks.

What creates this insatiable hunger? What void in our lives are we trying to fill with all these irrelevant and unrelated curiosities?

The logomaniacal Isaac Asimov, in the preface to his *Book of Facts*, suggests that an appetite for facts is the equivalent of a craving for any stimulant. Facts "turn [Asimov] on." No doubt. But why should the incidence of this sort of intoxication be waxing now, so suddenly and precipitously?

Irving Wallace and his son David Wallechinsky are less ingenuous in their introduction to *The People's Almanac*. They attribute this new hunger to the public's disenchantment with all institutions, not excluding academia and the press. "We feel that adults, inundated and manipulated by special-interest propaganda and government doubletalk in the guise of facts, are desperately searching for the truth and honesty in the information given them," they huff. Therefore, they have produced a tome that "lifts a few historic rocks to see what crawls beneath, [and that] constantly tries to get past some traditional No Trespassing signs that have long hidden certain people and certain institutions." Not only do they make themselves out to be a Woodward and Bernstein for raking together a heap of leaves out of a few hundred easily available books, they also argue that the resulting product is more effectively educational than any competitive texts. "Young people are eager to learn things that are relevant to their lives. This is a compendium that tries to provide in-depth material on selective topics rather than endless, dry, bare-bone dates and figures on all subjects."

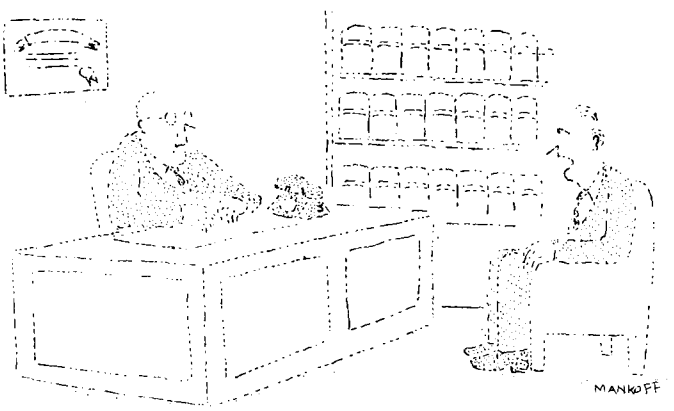
One may remain skeptical about the relevance of such trivia. Other attractions of "facts" are indisputable. Facts can make a person appear clever. An ability to play "Did-you-know," like a talent for telling jokes, can turn even a dullard into the star of a cocktail party or talk show. In a transient age, when most impressions are first impressions, a fund of facts can be a dazzling asset.

Facts are also easy to absorb. No fuss, no muss. No need to read for more than two consecutive minutes, or to recall a complex story line, or to commit oneself to the task of tackling an entire book.

A command of facts about a given subject—baseball, for instance—may constitute expertise. Facts, as they are presented in these myriad compilations—as random unconnected tidbits—do not, however, accumulate into any useful body of knowledge. We can learn nothing from the fact that Lincoln suffered seven election defeats before winning the presidency, or that Rutherford Hayes took his oath of office prematurely, unless we know the causes and consequences of such events, unless we can put them in their *context*.

Disembodied facts are fool's gold. They are so easy to mistake for true learning. But only the connections between facts can show us how the world works. History lurks in the verbs. It is disheartening but not surprising that the growth of our appetite for facts coincides with a decline in our awareness of and respect for history. Cut off from our own histories by our abandonment of old people and by our transience, we see history as unreal, a fiction that docudramatists can and do rewrite with impunity. But even as we neglect and abuse history, we sense that we do not know something that history could reveal. Never in the length of civilization have any people possessed more information, more data; yet we lack confidence about who we are, or where we're going, or why. History, we suspect, contains clues—if we search, we might discover the sources of our ancestors' self-confidence. Our ancestors

*Source: *Isaac Asimov's Book of Facts*



"I'm not here for anything in particular. I just feel litigious."

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knew who *they* were and where *they* were going. But we are too lazy to explore history, to commit ourselves to the long and painstaking task of understanding. Instead, we leaf through various books of "facts" for clues we will never find in them.

It may be argued that consuming "facts" is a harmless pastime, preferable in its way to watching television game shows or playing canasta. Perhaps it is. What depresses me about this fact mania, I suppose, is that it *merely* passes the time, just as snack foods merely fill the stomach without contributing anything to the nourishment of body or soul. All that we are given in life is time, a brief span in which to accomplish something, to learn something, to cultivate some corner of earth. Thanks to our forebears, we enjoy an unprecedented amount of unhindered time during which we need not concern ourselves with the necessities of existence. And what do we do with that time? Waste it. Fill our minds with crud with which we can build nothing—except reputations for cleverness.

An acquaintance of mine, an elderly literary gentleman, hypothesizes with a sigh that we are hurtling into a new era in which concern for the humanities, as we have known them, for history and philosophy and literature, is displaced by an intense busyness and absorption with the concerns of the moment. With all those channels on the television dial, all that news and data, all that technology to comprehend (how can we defend ourselves against meltdowns, or surface-to-air missiles, or low-level radiation, without knowing what they are?), and all those leisure options, who will have the time to devote to Sappho or Carlyle? True, we will sacrifice depth for breadth, wisdom for information, but we will be far too busy to recognize or regret our loss. After all, says my friend, humanism is not eternal. There was a time when man decided he had a soul, and there may come a time when he ceases to care whether he has one or not.

Any prediction is hazardous. My own conviction, born simply of optimism, is that the world will never lack at least a small band of beings who will demand meaning from their lives—not just that their time be filled but that it be fulfilled. These people will know somehow that the pursuit of meaning is a difficult, consuming challenge, and that they have not a moment to spare or waste. They will not be satisfied with mere information. They will seek matter in their facts, matter that may help to explain who they are, and why, and where they might be going. They will see their world, no doubt, as preoccupied with the wrong concerns. And they will rant against the triviality of their times.

—Carll Tucker

PUZZLES

Literary Crypt No. 150

PLOT X DREAMY VXT

MD YUMTH DUVORLMTH

LO MD XDLXVOY UB,

LO XFPXQD YOKFXCOD

RLXR MR MD LMD YERQ.

—SOCTXCY DLXP

Wit Twister No. 162

Edited by Arthur Swan

The object of the game is to complete the poem by thinking of one word whose letters, when rearranged, will yield the appropriate word for each series of blanks. Each dash with a blank corresponds to a letter of the word.

When drought and _ _ _ _ _ _
afflict the bankrupt land,
Gaunt beggars _ _ _ _ _ _
their way through hostile streets,
And seeds of _ _ _ _ _ _
sprout on every hand
To blossom red when no one works or eats.

A.S.

Answers next issue

MARCH 1 ANSWERS

Literary Crypt No. 149

Satire is a sort of glass, wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own.

Swift

Wit Twister No. 161

docker, rocked, corked

Middleton Double-Crostic No. 190

MARIE JASTROW: A TIME TO REMEMBER

Someone had told Papa that on that one day, Indians with firearms were brought into the city and given free reign to fill the street with their shooting and savagery. We spent that first July fourth huddled ... in our rooms, trying to comprehend the fearful din ... outside.

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J9AM

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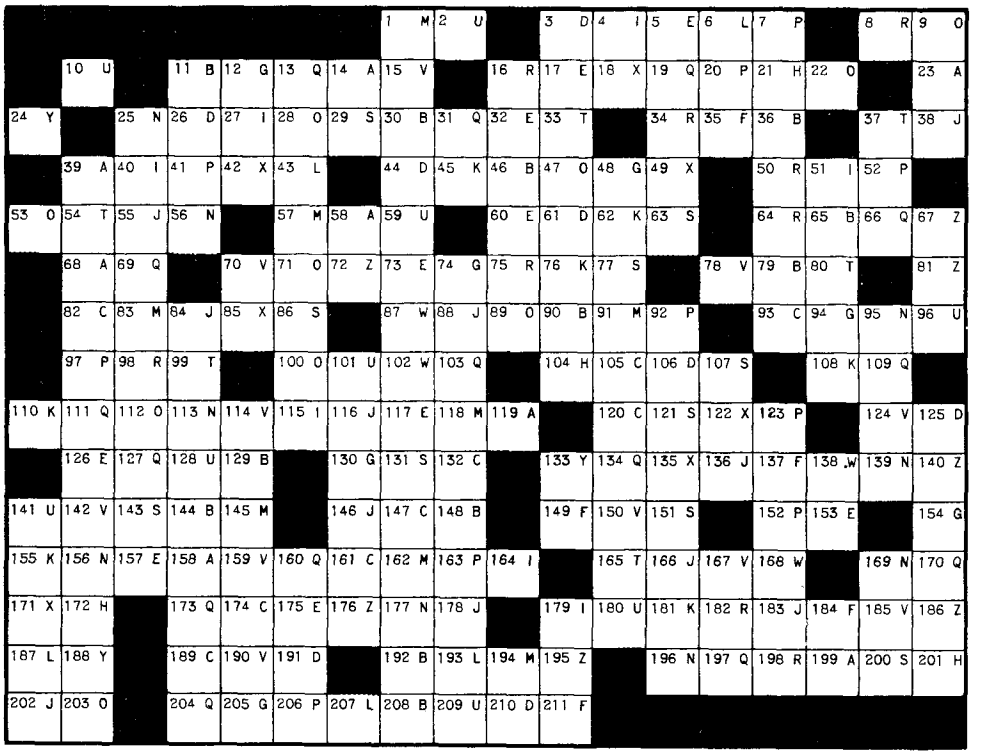
DOUBLE-CROSTIC NO. 191

by Thomas H. Middleton

Instructions:
If you've never solved one of these puzzles, it will probably look much more difficult than it actually is. If you can answer only a few of the WORDS correctly, you're on your way to solving the puzzle. Fill in the numbered blanks of all the WORDS you can guess and write the letter of each numbered blank in its correspondingly numbered square in the diagram. The letters printed in the upper-right-hand corners of the squares indicate from what WORD a particular square's letter comes.
The diagram, when filled in, should read as a quotation from a published work. The dark squares are the spaces between words. If there is no dark square at the end of a line, a word may carry over to the line below.
The first letter of each WORD, reading down, will spell the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken.
You should find yourself seeing words and phrases taking form in the diagram; so you can work back and forth, from WORDS to diagram and from diagram to WORDS, until the diagram is filled in.

Answer to Double-Crostic No. 190 appears on page 55.



CLUES	WORDS
A. South American revolutionary leader, ruler of Chile (1778–1842)	23 58 68 119 158 199 14 39
B. Commonplace (comp.)	46 79 90 148 11 36 65 129 192 208 30 144
C. *Stage of intense activity,* excitement, etc. (2 wds.)	82 93 105 120 132 147 161 174 189
D. Valley of the Inn River, Switzerland	191 210 3 26 44 61 106 125
E. "Slight shocks of young ___ interspersed" (comp.; Wordsworth, "The Prelude")	126 153 5 17 73 117 60 157 175 32
F. Piece of equipment for a buckaroo	137 149 184 211 35
G. Authoritative order or command	205 12 48 74 94 130 154
H. *"The worst of the lot, and the boldest thieves, be* ___" (Kipling, "Rhyme of *the Three Soldiers"*)	172 201 21 104
I. Pipe or tube for carrying water or other fluid	27 51 115 164 179 4 40
J. Excessively excited	88 55 136 183 146 202 38 84 116 166 178
K. Diseased, as the body or mind	45 62 76 108 110 155 181
L. *Famous*	187 193 207 6 43
M. Strained relationships	57 91 118 145 1 83 162 194

CLUES	WORDS
N. Winner, 1906 Nobel Peace Prize	113 177 196 25 56 95 139 156 169
O. Clym, Thomasin, etc. in *The Return of the Native*	203 9 89 112 28 47 22 71 100 53
P. Ian Smith's compatriots	92 97 206 52 163 152 20 41 123 7
Q. Above all (4 wds.)	13 134 160 170 204 109 127 197 69 103 111 19 66 173 31
R. "As some divinely ___ / Whose life in low estate began" (2 wds., Tennyson, "In Memoriam")	50 75 16 64 182 198 8 98 34
S. Overbearing, arbitrary (comp.)	77 29 63 121 131 143 200 86 151 107
T. Made lace	37 54 80 165 33 99
U. Accepting bribes (3 wds.)	209 180 2 101 96 141 10 128 59
V. Pen for leporidae (2 wds.)	150 167 78 124 114 185 190 142 15 70 159
W. Ultimate	138 102 87 168
X. Fine; polished	18 85 171 49 122 42 135
Y. *Bar or pin used as a key* or toggle	24 133 188
Z. Of enormous size, strength, etc.	67 72 195 186 176 81 140

The Back Door will be found on page 54.

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Newest Research Results: MERIT favored 3 to 1 over high tar brands in tests comparing taste and tar level.

Merit Topples High Tars!

Smokers find the taste of low tar MERIT matches that of high tar cigarettes.

New taste tests with thousands of smokers prove it.

Proof: A significant majority of smokers rate MERIT taste as good as—or better than—leading high tar brands. Even cigarettes having twice the tar!

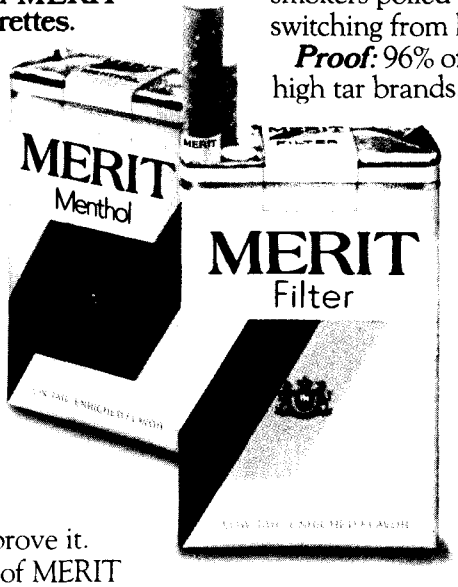
Proof: Of the 95% stating a preference, 3 out of 4 smokers chose the MERIT low tar/good taste combination over high tar leaders when tar levels were revealed.

MERIT smokers rate low tar MERIT satisfying taste alternative to high tar brands.

New national smoker study results prove it.

Proof: The overwhelming majority of MERIT smokers polled feel they didn't sacrifice taste in switching from high tar cigarettes.

Proof: 96% of MERIT smokers don't miss former high tar brands.



Proof: 9 out of 10 enjoy smoking *as much* since switching to MERIT, are *glad* they switched, and report MERIT is the best tasting low tar they've *ever* tried.

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